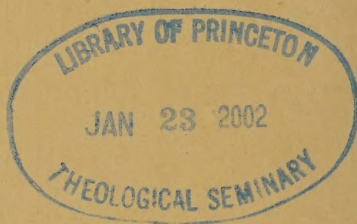


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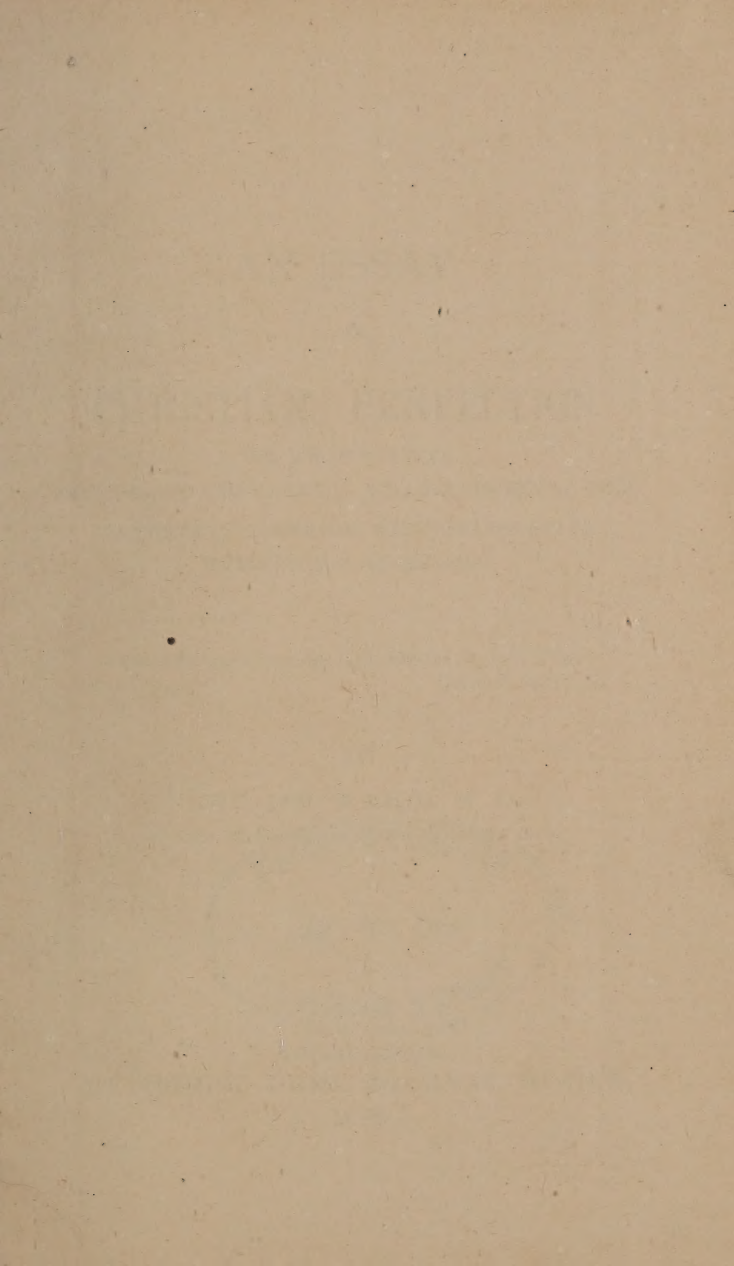
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AN ESSAY

ON

CHRISTIAN PERFECTION

OR, AN INVESTIGATION

INTO THE TRUE AND NATURAL DEGREE OF PERFECTION OF THIS

WORLD, AND THE IMPORTANCE OF THE

THEOLOGICAL QUESTIONS

CONCERNING THE SAME, AS THEY RELATE TO THE
CHRISTIAN PERFECTION.

BY

REV. WM. MILLER, M. D.

OF THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA.

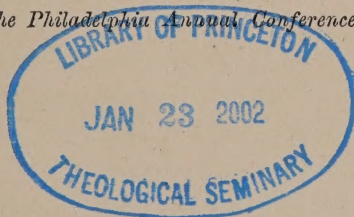
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1870

AN ESSAY
ON
CHRISTIAN PERFECTION
OR, AN IMPARTIAL
DISCUSSION AND CAREFUL RE-ADJUSTMENT OF THIS
IMPORTANT DOCTRINE, WITH CORRELATIVE
THEOLOGICAL QUESTIONS.

“The God of peace sanctify you through and through.” *Paul.*
German translation.

BY
REV. WM. MAJOR, M. D.
Of the Philadelphia Annual Conference.



PHILADELPHIA:
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PREFACE.

The following treatise, was commenced and the preliminary thoughts were written while the author was still in doubt and uncertainty, with regard to the true theory of Christian perfection. For he had observed, as others have done, some apparent discrepancies in Wesley, Watson, and other standard authors upon this subject; and attaching undue importance to these, could not appreciate the great underlying truths, which they taught.

Having tried for a long time, to find or to originate a theory entirely dissimilar from the Wesleyan, and yet, one that would harmonize perfectly, with the correlative Methodist theology, and the teachings of Divine revelation; and signally failing in this, after considerable research and an intense mental conflict, he was ultimately led to inquire, whether there might not be a careful re-adjustment of this doctrine, from the Bible stand-point, that would be perfectly intelligible and satisfactory.

PREFACE.

Thus he advanced step by step, until the clear light shone upon his pathway ; and in the act of entire consecration, by the exercise of implicit faith in Christ, he was suddenly brought into the happy consciousness of full salvation.

The substance of this Essay, was read before the Preachers' Meeting of Philadelphia, where it awakened unusual interest, and was received with general commendation.

It has also been delivered, in part, to several congregations in this city; and is now published at the request of many kind friends, with the hope that it may prove a blessing to some who are seeking for light upon this interesting topic.

The thoughtful reader will not find here an answer to every difficult question that may arise, but I trust, the sincere inquirer after truth, may be placed upon a line of thought that will facilitate his investigations ; and that the earnest seeker of Christian perfection, may receive impressions that will encourage him in its pursuit, and assist him to its attainment.

W. M.

Philadelphia, Pa.

June 16. 1873.

AN ESSAY ON CHRISTIAN PERFECTION.

PRELIMINARY THOUGHTS

The doctrine of Christian perfection, though not contained in our articles of religion, is generally regarded as one of the distinctive tenets of the Methodist Episcopal Church. It occupies a very prominent position in the teachings of Mr. Wesley and his coadjutors, and has ever since found its ablest exponents and strongest advocates, in the Methodist denomination. In fact, we, as a Church, have always professed a special Divine commission to spread this doctrine over all lands: and our humble efforts, though not in every instance well directed and faithfully sustained, have yet been wonderfully owned and blessed of God.

There has been no period, perhaps, when this subject commanded so much attention as at the present time. The pulpit and the press have been burdened with the sacred theme, and the hearts of the people are responding to its magical power, by a nobler consecration and a better life. The most extensive and permanent revivals of religion have recently occurred in connection with the preaching of this doctrine, and the direct promotion of Christian holiness.

And yet, strange as it may appear, it is undeniably true that, with all this profound interest, in the midst of these gracious manifestations, and under

the clearest light that has been reflected upon the subject, by its ablest apologist, there is evidently a greater diversity of opinion, and more confusion of thought upon this single point, than upon any other in the whole round of Methodist theology. Perhaps, there is no denomination of Christians that, upon all other doctrinal questions, presents so close a unity of faith, as our own. And, if there should be found amongst us, here and there an individual, who is considered heterodox upon any other fundamental doctrine of our common Methodism, he would receive very little sympathy from our people, and still less from the ministry. But upon this grand topic,—*this distinctive doctrine of our Church*, we could marshal opposing forces almost innumerable. There is apparently, an irrepressible conflict of theories. This is certainly a very unfortunate state of things, and one that demands our serious and prayerful consideration. How shall we account for the significant fact, that so many brethren, who are equally honest, intelligent and pious, differ so widely upon this subject, and upon this alone? It will not do for us to say that, all who dissent from us in theory, are either willfully ignorant of the truth, or indifferent to the claims of moral purity. That would be, not only a breach of Christian charity, but also a gross violation of truth and justice. For there are many, who have forsaken all for Christ, and who live in habitual communion with God, and yet they have utterly failed in all their endeavors to reconcile the popular theory of Christian perfection with the Bible doctrine of Spiritual regeneration.

They would cheerfully make any sacrifice and submit to any conditions, if they could but obtain clear light upon this interesting question, so as to make an intelligible, consistent and harmonious theology from beginning to end. Their minds are thirsting for truth, their hearts are panting for purity, but they are still in darkness and doubt, thus earnestly appealing to us for help. They solemnly affirm, "If you will show us the philosophy of this doctrine, we shall be ready to embrace it." They are honest skeptics and open to conviction; their difficulties are real and demand attention, nor is it wise in us, to treat them with indifference. For we cannot doubt their sincerity or deny the reasonableness of their request.

As the divinely authorized teachers of religion, we are morally bound to meet this issue fairly, and not to evade, or even seem to shun the responsibility involved. An equivocal position or an obtuse conscience, with reference to this important question, would be a standing reproach to our ministerial character, and an immense injury to the cause of Christ. Therefore, if it be possible, we must ascertain the precise and complete gospel theory of this doctrine, and then earnestly cooperate with each other for the glory of God, in its promotion. But alas, in vain do we consult our standard authors, or traverse the entire literature of the subject, or listen to the living teacher of our holy faith, for a *full well-defined and perfectly satisfactory discussion and adjustment* of this great question. And yet, we must believe that, every doctrine of Divine revelation, which affects the

happiness and destiny of immortal souls, is so clearly presented and may be so fully explained, that "the way-faring man, though illiterate, shall not err therein," or fail to comprehend the whole truth.

Unfortunately however for the theology of this question, we find among those who profess to enjoy superior light and full salvation, many who deem it expedient to avoid all controversy, all doctrinal investigation, all close and rigid analysis upon this subject and who devote themselves entirely to the promotion of a higher Christian experience, without stopping to give the much desired and greatly needed instruction. This may be very well in itself, and perhaps, most profitable to the masses, but it does not satisfy the intelligence of many thoughtful minds, nor meet the difficulties of many struggling hearts. Indeed it is rather calculated to foster suspicion, for it looks as if this doctrine would not bear the light, or its advocates were conscious of their weakness and inability to solve the theological difficulties involved. Some have publicly compromised the question, by saying "We don't understand this doctrine, we can't explain it." Others, more prudent, have carefully avoided any such doubtful acknowledgement, and have occasionally ventured upon a formal exposition, not without some degree of success it is true, and yet, after all that has been produced, the exact theology of this question remains to be written.

No doubt much of the embarrassment attending this discussion, grows out of a careless use of theo-

logical terms and Scripture language. Words are symbols of thought, designed to express and convey our ideas to others; and hence, when they are improperly applied, there will, of course, be some degree of obscurity and misapprehension. A precise terminology is more important to a correct theology, than what we are accustomed to believe.

The terms "purity," "holiness," "sanctification," "perfection," and the phrases "entire sanctification," "perfect love," and "Christian perfection," are often used interchangeably, as if they meant one and the same thing, which is not the case at all; for they each have a definite import, and their promiscuous application is misleading. Then again it should be observed, that owing to the paucity of language, these terms are employed in various significations, as may readily be seen by the scope of the passage and its connections. Now, it is certainly unfair in logic and pernicious in moral effect, to quote a text in which the word "perfection" is used in one sense, in order to prove it in another; or to employ general terms, and deduce from them specific ideas. And yet, precisely this kind of sophistry is very common in some works on the subject of Christian perfection.

Another source of error and its perpetuity, is an undue reverence for merely human authorities; taking it for granted, without critical examination, that because they contain some truth, therefore they present all that can be known upon the subject. Nothing will so effectually close the way to

knowledge, or paralyze our endeavors to gain light, as the flattering presumption, that we understand all about this matter, and have nothing more to learn.

It is exceedingly improbable that we shall arrive at correct ideas of revealed religion, if we come to the Bible with preconceived notions, and then begin to cast round for isolated passages and incidental illustrations to sustain them. But, we must approach the word of God with becoming humility, and in the spirit of candor search for truth as for hidden treasures, that we may learn the mind of Christ. And especially let us remember that a profound insight of divine things, can only be secured by a special illumination of the Holy Ghost; for it is written, "The things of God knoweth no man but the Spirit of God, . . . because they are spiritually discerned." "He that is spiritual discerneth all things," even the deep things of God. "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine."

And another very common mistake is, that instead of beginning at the foundation and proceeding in the natural order of spiritual progression, we leap at once to the top of the ladder, and then commence to theorize upon the intervening spaces. It is true that Christian experience, like divine Providence, is best read backward. So that he who has gained pre-eminence in grace, will best comprehend the profounder mysteries, as well as the fundamental principles of religion. But, it is not so in regard to the acquisition of theoretical knowledge.

The novice in theology, as in every other science, must begin with the rudiments of truth, and then advance gradually to higher attainments, and only by patient thought and earnest endeavor can he hope to reach the sublimest verities of our holy faith. But, let us not forget, dear brethren, that divine grace can do more to solve our theological difficulties, than all our philosophical speculations will ever accomplish alone.

CORRELATIVE DOCTRINES.

It is not our design to discuss side issues or correlative doctrines, only so far as they may serve to reflect light upon the main question. Neither do we propose to review the various theories upon this subject, nor directly to antagonize what we believe to be erroneous teaching; but briefly to consider the whole question as we find it presented in the oracles of God. "For if any speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them."

At this point, it is worthy of special notice that a *dual* import runs through the whole of speculative theology, as it relates to man and his salvation. The *grand secret* then, to the right understanding of this subject, is to observe the *twofold signification of the principal terms employed*.

We proceed now, as fundamental to this discussion to inquire,—

1. What is sin? There are two kinds of sin,—original and actual. Original sin is the native depravity of the human soul, or the natural tendency to moral evil. Actual sin is the transgression of the law, or disobedience to the will of God. It also comprehends the guilt and corruption acquired by sinning. Let us observe that there is a vast difference between the native depravity of an infant, and the personal guilt and acquired corruption of an adult transgressor,—just as much as there is between the hereditary taint of Scrofula and a well marked case of Pulmonary Consumption. The first is bad enough, but the second is infinitely worse. In the one case, the intelligent and skillful physician would hasten to arrest the disease, that he might save the life of his patient, and in the other, he would endeavor to purify the blood, and thus renovate the system from a tuberculous diathesis. And in a similar way the great Physician, by spiritual regeneration, saves the soul from eternal death, and by entire sanctification purifies the heart from all inherent depravity; and thus fits man for a happier life here, and a brighter destiny in the blessed hereafter. For complete holiness not only ensures, but also intensifies the bliss of heaven to its possessor.

2. What is justification? There are two kinds of justification,—legal and evangelical. Legal justification is a vindication according to the strict demands of the law, on the ground of perfect moral purity. The holy angels are justified in this way.

and man might be also if he had never sinned; but one who has transgressed the law, can never afterward be justified by the law. "Therefore, by the deeds of the law there shall be no flesh justified in his sight; for by the law is the knowledge of sin." Evangelical justification is the imputation of righteousness by faith, or the pardon and acceptance of one who is, and confesses himself to be, a sinner, and who repents of his sins and believes on the Lord Jesus Christ. He thus becomes fully reconciled to God, and is legally regarded as if he had never sinned at all. "Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past." "Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Mark, evangelical justification is the forgiveness of actual sin, and a personal salvation by faith in Christ.

3. What is spiritual regeneration? Mr. Watson says, "The change in regeneration consists in the recovery of the moral image of God upon the heart." Mr. Wesley calls it "An entire change of heart." The Catechism of the M. E. Church defines it thus: "Regeneration is the new birth of the soul in the image of Christ, whereby we become the children of God."

These definitions, no doubt, are correct in a general sense; but let us be a little more specific, that we may ascertain precisely what regeneration com-

prehends. It consists of a twofold change in our moral nature,—that is, a cleansing process and a renovating process. As indicated by St. Paul, in Titus 3: 5: “He saved us by the *washing* of regeneration and the *renewing* of the Holy Ghost.” The same distinction may be seen by comparing the following scriptures:—“And such were some of you; but ye are *washed*, but ye are *sanctified*, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God,” 1 Cor. 6: 11; “Of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and *sanctification*, and redemption,” 1 Cor. 1: 30; “If any man be in Christ, he is a *new creature*; old things are passed away, behold all things are become new,” 2 Cor. 5: 17; “In Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a *new creation*,” Gal. 6: 16. Thus we find that a double process in regeneration is clearly taught by the great Apostle, both directly and indirectly. Now, as the justification of an adult believer is the pardon of his *actual* sins, so also the sanctification that is concomitant with regeneration is a cleansing from the corruption *acquired by actual transgression*, accompanied by “the renewing of the Holy Ghost,” but it does not *entirely* remove the *inherent tendency to sin*.

If we keep in mind this important distinction, namely, that *primary* sanctification is a constituent part of regeneration, and that *entire* sanctification is to be subsequently obtained, it will enable us

rightly to understand and fully reconcile some apparently conflicting portions of holy Scripture. As for instance those in which all true believers are denominated, "saints," "sanctified," "pure," "clean," "holy," "holy brethren," with others that represent "babes in Christ," as being "carnal," having among them "envy, and strife, and divisions; walking as men." Also, the Apostle's exhortation, "Let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." And likewise his prayer for the Church at Thessalonica, "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly." All this becomes perfectly transparent and intelligible when viewed from our present position; but, on the other hand, we have found it utterly impossible to harmonize the above, and many similar texts, upon any other hypothesis. So much for the sanctification of regeneration.

The renovating process of regeneration implies first, the impartation of spiritual life to the soul. "You hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins." "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." It includes secondly, the inspiration of divine love in the heart. "The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us." "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren." It secures thirdly, the communication of supernatural power to man. "God hath given to us the spirit of power." We are "strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power."

This includes the power of holy resistance. "Resist the devil and he will flee from you." "Sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under the law, but under grace." The power of heroic endurance. "We glory in tribulation also, knowing that tribulation worketh patience." And the power of noble achievement. "The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but spiritual and mighty through God, to the pulling down of strongholds." It constitutes fourthly, our divine sonship, and is accompanied by the witness of adoption into the family of God. "Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father." "The Spirit beareth witness with our spirits, that we are the sons of God." And lastly, it confirms our title to everlasting life. "If children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ." "Begotten again,"—that is, regenerated, "to a living hope, . . . to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation."

Such is the grand work of spiritual regeneration, and these are some of its benefits, present and prospective. We do not propose to depreciate the new birth of the soul or the primary endowment of grace, in order that we may give prominence to any subsequent manifestation of Holy Ghost power; but we would rather magnify the grace already received, and then tell the disciples of Jesus, es

pecially those who "hunger and thirst, after righteousness," that it is their blessed privilege, to "be filled with all the fulness of God."

"O that the perfect grace were given,
Thy love diffused abroad ;
O that our hearts were all a heaven,
Forever fill'd with God."

CHRISTIAN PERFECTION.

Having briefly reviewed the incipient stages of religious experience, let us now proceed to consider the higher Christian life, in its various aspects.

Here the grand question arises, to which we invite special attention. What is Christian perfection? This is a comprehensive phrase, and covers the whole ground of experimental and practical holiness. As we have found two kinds of justification, and a two-fold change in regeneration, so there are also two distinct departments of Christian perfection. First, the perfection of gracious endowment or moral purity and perfect love. Secondly, the perfection of spiritual development or Christian maturity.

The perfection of moral purity or entire sanctification, which also implies perfect love, is a gracious endowment, instantaneously obtained, by faith in Christ. *This* kind of perfection, is not attained by growth in grace or spiritual development, but it is the immediate result, of a special communication from God. In this respect, it is quite similar to the new birth, for, it is produced in the heart by

the Holy Ghost, and is a matter of conscious personal experience.

The perfection of christian maturity, is a gradual development attained by spiritual growth, under the fostering influence of divine grace. As in the kingdom of nature, a rose-bud expands into a full-blown rose, a blossom matures into the rich, ripe fruit of autumn, and an acorn develops into a stately forest tree; so in the kingdom of grace, the justified soul expands in moral beauty, the regenerate nature matures in spiritual life, and the thoroughly sanctified heart develops into the highest style of Christian manhood. But, let us keep these two ideas distinct, purity is one thing, and maturity is another. Purification may be instantaneous, but maturation must be gradual. None grows into purity, and no one is born into maturity. The facts of experience in the one case, and the analogies of nature in the other, are alike sustained by the teachings of Divine revelation.

To this duality of perfection, the apostle Paul seems to refer, in Phil. 3. 12, 15. "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect. * * * Let us therefore, as many as be perfect be thus minded." Here we notice one sense, in which he claims to be perfect, I presume, he means the perfection of entire sanctification and perfect love; for doubtless, in this sense, he was perfect. But, there is another sense, in which he was not perfect,—that is, in the perfection of Christian maturity or spiritual development; for manifestly, in this sense,

he was not yet perfected. He was still capable of growth in grace, and ripening for celestial glory until the close of life.

And like the great apostle, we may be already perfect in purity and love, and yet capable of continued advancement in the divine life, perhaps, of eternal progression in moral excellence, approaching nearer and still nearer to the perfection and felicity of God himself. The theory of a two-fold perfection, is evidently implied, and, we think, fully sustained, by many other passages, in the New Testament.

On the perfection of gracious endowment, take for instance, the declaration, "They were all filled with the Holy Ghost." The apostolic prayers, "That ye might be filled with all the fullness of God." "The very God of peace sanctify you wholly." Or as it is rendered in the German, "Der Gott des Freidens, heilige euch durch und durch." That is literally, "The God of peace sanctify you through and through."

Notice also, the profession of Christian perfection, as implied, in the language of the apostles. "Let us therefore, as many as *be perfect*, be thus minded." St. Paul. "*Herein is our love made perfect*; that we might have boldness in the day of judgment; because as he is, so are we in this world." St. John. Here a certain kind and high degree of perfection, is clearly taught, as the gracious privilege and actual possession, of true believers in Christ.

Now compare the above citations with the following,—on the perfection of spiritual development

or Christian maturity. "As new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may *grow* thereby." "But *grow* in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." "For the *perfecting* of the saints, *** Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a *perfect* man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect," or "perfected," as Wesley renders it, and says, "there is a difference between being perfect and being perfected. The one is fitted for the race, the other, is ready for the prize." In these Scriptures another and higher style of perfection, is indicated as the possible attainment of earnest and faithful Christians.

It is highly important that, in the consideration of this subject, the *dual* idea of Christian perfection be always borne in mind, otherwise, we shall become involved in certain theological difficulties, from which there is, so far as we have been able to discover, no logical escape. And, on the other hand, by carefully observing this distinction, we can maintain the unity of Divine truth, exhibit the harmony of Christian experience, and secure an intelligible and consistent theology in all its parts.

At this stage in our investigation, it may be well to define certain relative terms, so that they may be rightly understood and properly applied.

Entire Sanctification, in a general sense, is the state of being thoroughly cleansed from sin; but

to be a little more explicit, it is a complete deliverance from inbred corruption,—from all carnal or sinward tendencies of the soul; such as, evil thoughts, unholy desires and sinful tempers. As indicated by the following scriptures,—“Cleanse thou me from *secret* faults.” “From *all* your idols will I cleanse you.” “Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from *all* iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people.” “He loved the church and gave himself for it, that he might present it unto himself a glorious church: not having spot, or *wrinkle*. or *any such thing*: but that it should be *Holy* and *without blemish*.” These passages certainly teach, a complete internal purification, as well as, an entire external consecration, to be the great design of Christ’s atonement, and the normal condition of the Christian Church.

Perfect love, is not only true love, as to its nature, and supreme love, as to its object and relations, but, it is pure complete and all absorbing love as to its character and degree. *It is to love fully up to ones capacity, when the heart is free from sin.* For, if the capacity be obstructed or partially occupied, by an opposite principle, *then the love must be defective or incomplete.* And it is written, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with *all* thy heart, with *all* thy soul, with *all* thy mind, and with *all* thy strength; and thy neighbor *as* thyself.” Again, “A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; *as* I have loved you, that ye also love one another.” It is a Christ-like devotion,—a self-sacrificing love!

Entire sanctification, is the negative part of full salvation, while perfect love, is the positive. The two together constitute, what we call the perfection of gracious endowment. These are concomitant blessings, and enter into the experience of the same individual at the same time. So that he who is entirely sanctified is also made perfect in love; and both are produced in the soul, by the plenary endowment of the Holy Ghost. Like all other gracious benefits, this is received by faith, and hence, it is an instantaneous work; and always accompanied, by the witness of the Spirit.

The term, "*Holy* " or "*holiness*," in its largest signification, or the phrase, "perfect holiness," is, perhaps, the very best synonym of Christian perfection. Like many other words, this, is frequently employed in a general sense, as when all God's people are called, "a holy nation." Then again, it is applied to the external deportment or practical piety, as in Heb. 12. 14. "Follow holiness," that is, pursue or practice holiness, "without which no man shall see the Lord." But, sometimes, it evidently comprehends both internal and eternal purity: as in 2 Cor. 7, 1. "Let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." This passage, is one of the strongest, bearing directly upon this point: and when fairly interpreted and honestly applied, goes far toward settling the question at issue. To be "cleansed from *all* filthiness of the flesh and spirit is to be entirely sanctified; and to perfect holiness in the fear of God,

is to become morally perfect, both in heart and life.

This earnest exhortation, like many similar ones, is manifestly addressed to those, who were, at the time, in a state of grace. They were no doubt, "born of the spirit," and hence, partially sanctified, —children of God, and heirs of his glory ; and yet, they are urged on to a more thorough purification of their nature, and a higher perfection of Christian character. This teaches, by implication, at least, not only the possibility, but also, the importance of complete salvation, for all true believers in Christ.

OBJECTIONS ANSWERED

It would be quite impracticable, in this brief essay, to consider all the objections that might be urged against this doctrine, nor is it important that we should do so, and yet, a few points may claim our attention.

If it should be objected that there are but few passages in the Bible, bearing directly upon this subject, and that these are susceptible of a different application, we answer, first, the same objection might be urged against the doctrine of spiritual regeneration. For there are very few texts, in which that doctrine is positively presented, perhaps, not half so many as can be found on the topic of Christian perfection ; and yet, they are considered quite sufficient for the purpose of establishing the commonly received dogma of the new birth. We remark again, that the real question, in regard to

those Scriptures, is not, whether they can be construed into some other meaning, but what is their plain common sense interpretation. Two or three clear, strong passages, that by a fair and just exegesis, teach this doctrine, ought to arrest every conscience, silence every tongue, and inspire faith in every heart. It is not a very difficult task to explain away the force of holy Scripture, or to close our eyes to its true import ; but what shall we gain by such trifling with sacred things? Surely nothing but disappointment and self-reproach, and perhaps, eternal condemnation! For it is written, "If any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book."

Again, the question has been raised, in the form of objection,—“Suppose an individual entirely sanctified, should fall from this state of grace, does he also loose his justification?” To this we reply, that will depend altogether upon the nature of his offence, and the circumstances of the case. If he commits an actual sin, he not only forfeits his entire sanctification, but also his justification. Now, it is a well known fact, that one who is in the regenerate state, may decline in spirituality, and yet not be entirely back-sliden ; his justification may be impaired, without being destroyed. And, in like manner, one who is entirely sanctified, may so far decline in spirituality and moral power, as to loose the evidence of entire purity and perfect love, and

yet retain the consciousness of a justified state or a personal acceptance with God.

The evidence of heart purity, may also be lost, by simply neglecting to confess it. This excellent grace, is designed pre-eminently to glorify God. All the saints, and especially those who are filled with the Spirit, ought to be burning and shining lights, in the world. And when they fail to answer this divine purpose, the Spirit is grieved, the Father veils his face, while Jesus is "touched with the feeling of our infirmities." Well may the weeping prophet exclaim,—“How is the gold become dim! how is the most fine gold changed! The precious sons of Zion, comparable to fine gold, how are they esteemed as earthen pitchers.” Alas, they have been unfaithful, and have fallen from this great dignity; their beauty is tarnished, their glory is departed, and yet, they are not on that account to be reckoned with the ungodly and the outcast.

And here we might also observe that, as many who have been justified, do not retain their justification unimpaired, so also there are some, who have been entirely sanctified, and have since declined into an abnormal condition, or “turned again to the beggarly elements,” but, that does not invalidate the doctrine, nor disprove the truth and genuineness of their former experience, in either case. It only proves that there is no state of grace, -no sublime height of moral perfection on earth, from which we may not fall; and that it becomes us all, to “watch and pray, lest we enter into temptation.”

But again, some one will insist that entire sanctification, is simply more religion. We answer, yes, it is more religion, but, it is more religion, in a *pure* heart. A man may have true religion; he may then get more, and still much more, and yet, not be entirely sanctified. He may then seek and obtain a perfectly pure heart, and that will be a wonderful accession to his piety. But, he may subsequently go on getting more and still more religion; until the triumphs of grace shall terminate in the glory of immortality.

Do you ask, can a man be more than entirely sanctified? Certainly not more pure; for, if he be entirely sanctified, then he is cleansed from all sin,—he is made every whit whole. And yet, he is still capable of growth in grace; that is, an increase in all the elements of a noble Christian character; and that will greatly strengthen, confirm and intensify his moral purity. But, as the best results of intellectual power, can be realized only under the most favorable circumstances, and absolutely require, “a sound mind in a sound body,” so also, the highest type of moral excellence demands proper physical and mental conditions, and surroundings congenial to its development.

It is a well established fact, that there are certain diseases, which spend their force, either directly or indirectly upon the nerve centres and the vital fluids of the body, and thus interfere with its normal functions; and at the same time exert a reflex action upon the mind and the soul. There are

exceptions to all general rules, but, it is scarcely to be expected that, a man with impaired digestion, poisoned blood, congested brain or shattered nerves, will be a very bright example of saving grace, whatever may be his personal experience. Perhaps, comparatively few persons are so happily constituted, evenly balanced and favorably situated, as to furnish an adequate idea of finished Christian manhood. The beloved St. John, the angelic Fletcher, and the sainted Cookman, are among the most distinguished.

Mysterious and complex, as this question may have appeared to some, if we look at it from the proper stand-point, it is perfectly transparent, all radiant with the light of heaven, bearing the unmistakable image and superscription of a Divine authority. And we are fully persuaded that, there are no theological difficulties connected with this subject, but what can be just as thoroughly explained and as harmoniously adjusted, as those which are relevant to other parts of Christian experience and Bible doctrine. So that, on the ground of impartial reason, this has an equal claim to our confidence and support

But, there are two ways for the solution of this important problem. The first, is short, and plain and easy of access. It is simply to accept, with implicit confidence, the declarations of inspired truth, as corroborated by the living testimony of the Church, and be fully saved. The second, is rough, and crooked, and wearisome, and long. It

is, to work out the knotty question for ourselves, and in our own way. This will require earnest thought, severe logic, hard work and much prayer.

Then, if we have the brain to bear it, the courage of soul to endure hardness, the holy determination to sacrifice all for truth, the confiding disposition to follow the leadings of the Spirit and a mighty faith in Christ, as a personal Saviour, God may come to our rescue, amidst the agonizing conflict, and lift us at once, from the mists of error and the fogs of human reason, into the glorious sunlight of a special divine revelation. He may teach us an orthodox creed, by giving us an apostolic experience. And after all, that is about the only way in which man can really solve the problem, and fully comprehend the mysteries of experimental religion.

METHOD OF ITS ATTAINMENT.

If, as we have endeavored to show, Christian perfection is a Bible doctrine, and its possession the blessed privilege of all true believers, who properly seek for it, then, it becomes an eminently practical question. And we now propose to answer the inquiry,—how may we obtain this higher life,—this better experience or special blessing?

1. We must ascertain precisely where we are, in what particular stage of the Christian life. Have we been soundly converted? Are we now in the regenerate state? If, upon a faithful self-examination, we find ourselves back-sliden in heart or life,

then, we had better, first seek to regain our justification, and afterward, "go on unto perfection," according to the apostolic direction. For, if we begin to seek entire sanctification, while we are in an unjustified condition, we shall be very liable to mistake simple restoration to the divine favor, for complete salvation from sin. No doubt some have failed to make this distinction, and consequently, they have professed entire sanctification prematurely, and, of course, have also failed to adorn the profession. It may be seriously doubted, whether any one can successfully seek full salvation, unless he be at the time, in the normal condition of the regenerate state. With God all things are possible; and we freely concede, that he might, if it were expedient and proper, lift a man at once, from the deepest degradation of sin, into the sublimest heights of holiness, but, there is no evidence that he will do it, under any ordinary circumstances.

There are degrees in religion. The interior life, as well as, the external development, is progressive; and Christian experience consists of successive stages. Thus, God commands sinners to repent, that they may be pardoned. He calls upon back-sliders to return unto him, that he may heal their back-slidings. And he requires of all his adopted children, that they should "leave the principles of the doctrine of Christ, and go on unto perfection." Each class has its appropriate work to do; and there is a beautiful gradation, rising one above the other, from the lowest to the highest attainments in grace.

2. Let us endeavor to get clear and correct views, of the blessing to be sought. It is, a plenary endowment of the Holy Ghost, or entire sanctification and perfect love ; distinct from spiritual regeneration, on the one hand, and from Christian maturity, on the other. It is a *special* blessing, accompanied by the direct witness of the Spirit to be obtained by grace, through faith, and in answer to fervent, effectual prayer.

Mr. Fletcher says, "If we would hit a mark, we must know precisely where it is, otherwise we shall be liable to shoot too high or too low." This will account for the failure of many. They have missed the mark, for want of correct ideas. No doubt there are some, who, at the time of their conversion, had very crude conceptions of the new birth. And there may also be some, whose notions of Christian perfection, are exceedingly defective, and yet, they have obtained the blessing of heart-purity and perfect love. But, it is nevertheless true, that an orthodox creed will greatly facilitate our progress in the divine life, and in the formation of a good moral character.

If you inquire, how shall I get clear views, and be assured that they are right? Read the Bible, in reference to this subject, for *it* is the great chart of life. Follow the example of Christ, for *He* is the true pattern of holiness. Examine the best works, go and hear the ablest teachers of this doctrine ; compare them with the oracles of God, thus "prove all things, and hold fast that which is good." At-

tend diligently upon the means of grace, especially, meetings for the promotion of holiness, for it is the living testimony of sanctified hearts and lives, that must demonstrate to our intelligence the truth and power of this experience. Remember also, that we must be sincere and candid, honest and true to our convictions, and willing to be led by the Holy Spirit, even contrary to our pre-conceived opinions, provided, we find them to be erroneous. In this way we cannot fail to gain right views, and a full assurance of faith. For it is promised, "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine."

3. You must secure a deep and positive conviction of its necessity and importance. This will inspire your zeal and assist your progress; and, it is impossible for any one to obtain this great blessing, until he becomes thoroughly in earnest. "The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force." The intensity of desire for moral purity, is represented by the divine Teacher, as "hunger and thirst after righteousness." Your efforts in the pursuit of entire sanctification, will be likely to accord with the depth of your convictions and the fervency of your aspirations. "Then shall ye seek and find me, when ye search for me with all your heart."

The proper degree of interest and feeling upon this subject, may readily be acquired, if we sincerely desire it. Careful introspection and self-examination, will disclose the need of a more thorough purification. We shall find evil thoughts, impure

desires and bad tempers springing up in our hearts, a chronic tendency to back-sliding, a disposition to shun the cross, a formalism in our devotions, a captious spirit, and an instinctive dislike for entire sanctity. The professors of holiness, the means of its promotion, the word itself, and every thing connected with this subject is offensive to some persons. These are so many unmistakable indications of an unsanctified heart and a dangerous condition.

Devout meditation upon God's word, will produce conviction of its truth, and inspire confidence in its attainment. Here we shall find, that it is taught, both by precept and example, that it is positively promised and set forth, as the privilege of all true believers, that it was sought and obtained, by the primitive Christians, and that complete salvation, is the great design of Christ's atonement.

4. Make an entire consecration of yourself to God. Present your soul and body, time and talents, substance and influence, all that you have and are,—a complete devotement to Christ.

This is an important point, and one that is not always rightly understood or properly presented. We have heard a great deal about the first, and the second consecration; the one as it relates to justification, and the other to full salvation. But, speaking with precision, consecration is not included in the stipulation for pardon. God does not require sinners to consecrate themselves to him, as such, but, he demands that they should renounce their

old master, the devil, and all his works, and make an unconditional surrender to him. "Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon."

The consecration, if such it may be called, which accompanies repentance, is not immediate and actual, but rather prospective and conditional. Thus, the penitent resolves, "if God will hear my prayer, pardon my sins and give me a new heart, then the Lord shall be my God, and I will love and serve him all the days of my life." This, has more the nature of a pledge or a vow, than of real consecration, but, it is the best that the unconverted sinner can do, for he may truly say,

"Nothing but sin have I to give."

We cannot consecrate our sins, our bad passions or evil habits to the service of God; and the idea of laying them upon the altar, is simply ridiculous, and entirely at variance with teachings of God's word. "Cast away from you, all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed; and make you a new heart and a new spirit."

For one who has been a wicked rebel against God, to talk about personal consecration before his sins are forgiven, is an affectation of dignity and self-importance it seems to us, which is altogether inconsistent with the idea of true penitence. "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eyes seeth thee wherefore I abhor my self, and repent in dust and ashes."

Deliverance from conscious guilt and impending ruin, is the all-absorbing thought of the truly awakened soul. To obtain this, he is willing to make any sacrifice, assume any responsibility or comply with any conditions, that may be required; but actual consecration, is subsequent to his regeneration, in the very nature of the case it must be so. The apostle exhorts,—“Present your bodies, a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God; which is your reasonable service.” And in another place he informs us, that the unregenerate are, “dead in trespasses and sins;” hence, it follows that, they cannot present the sacrifice here specified,—“a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God.”

All true Christians are, in a general sense, consecrated to God. They are chosen out of the world and set apart for his glory. “Know that the Lord hath set apart him that is godly for himself.” “Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people.”

In regard to entire consecration, as it relates to complete salvation. This is quite similar to that, which is common to the Christian life; and differs, not in the formula, but in the spirit and fulness of the dedication. It is more specific and comprehensive in its character, more direct and impressive in its influence, more immediate and fruitful in its results. It implies, a complete separation from all that is sinful, an intensified allegiance to God, a renewing of the covenant, a sinking into the Divine will, and a sealing of all for Christ. It has a spec-

ial object, a holy inspiration and a controlling power peculiar to itself. Pride and vain-glory, self and sin, and every thing that is opposed to purity and love, must go down into the dust at the feet of Jesus. There must be an entire self-abnegation, and an unreserved personal assignment to God. No keeping back a part of the price, no mental reservation, but an uncompromising devotion of all to his service, and that forever. If you would realize this great blessing, place yourself fairly upon the altar, take your hands off the sacrifice, and keep them off; for it is no longer yours,—it is sacred to Christ. Then, just let God have his own way about this matter, and a short work will the Lord make, of your complete redemption from sin!

5. Faith is the proximate condition of salvation, in all its stages, and absolutely indispensable, in every case. “Without faith it is impossible to please God: he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.” “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved,”—*completely* saved, for “all things are possible to him that believeth.”

There are two kinds of faith,—historical faith, and saving faith, or the faith of assent and the faith of confidence. The faith of assent, is a rational conviction founded upon sufficient evidence: “Now we believe, not because of thy saying: for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world.”

The faith of confidence, goes beyond the domain of reason and the limits of personal consciousness, into the region of the supernatural and unseen. "Because thou hast seen me, thou has believed ; blessed are they which have not seen, and yet have believed." The faith of assent goes as far as reason can demonstrate truth, which is always in perfect harmony with divine revelation. When reason has reached her utmost boundary, she still points onward in the direction which the Bible indicates, as the way of truth and right. And here the sublime faith of confidence is brought into requisition, by which man is enabled to grasp the invisible Christ and commune with the Father in heaven. Like the high priest, on the great day of atonement, this faith enters with trembling steps into the sanctum sanctorum, and lost to human view, holds audience with the Lord of all ; and then returns from that sacred mysterious interview, with a shining face and a glad soul, to bless the Church and save the world.

The faith of assent is fundamental to the faith of confidence ; and the faith of confidence is complementary to the faith of assent. A mere assent to the truth of the Bible, the divinity of Christ, his willingness and his power to save, will neither justify nor sanctify the soul. But an implicit trust in God,—a devout clinging to Christ, and a confident expectation of the promised blessing, this is saving faith. "For with the heart, man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth, confession is made unto

salvation." All gracious endowments are received by faith, and should be confessed for the glory of God and the benefit of our souls.

There are three distinct elements in this faith. The element of confidence or simple trust in Christ for salvation,—“Lord I believe, help thou mine unbelief.” The element of hope or an expectation of promised good,—“Faith is the substance of things hoped for.” And the element of full assurance or a realizing sense of present salvation,—an appropriating faith,—“The evidence of things not seen.” When we reach this last element, we touch Christ, and feel the saving power in our hearts. “If I may but touch the hem of his garment, I shall be whole.”

But, some one will say, “Is not this precisely the kind of faith by which we are justified?” Certainly it is. And the very same kind of faith, intensified and properly directed, is indispensable to our full redemption. Jesus says to us, as he did to the blind men,—“According to your faith be it unto you.” That is, according both to the subject and the measure of your faith, it shall be done. God may sometimes exceed our utmost expectation, but usually he gives in accordance with our faith and prayer. Thus, when we ask, in faith, for pardon, we receive forgiveness; and so, when we ask, in true faith, for entire sanctification, we shall be cleansed from all sin.

It is not difficult to believe, even unto full salvation, if we are on believing ground. When we

have made the entire consecration, and there remains nothing for us to do, but to believe, then it becomes an easy task. Why! it is just as natural for a true believer to believe, as it is for a living healthy man to breathe. When there is any difficulty in the respiration, there is some cause for it; and so when there is much trouble in believing, there must be an adequate cause for that. It is an axiom in medical science, "Remove the cause and the effect will cease."

Now, suppose a man has received an injury of the head, producing fracture of the skull and compression of the brain. There will be difficulty of breathing, perhaps, drowsiness or lethargy, and it would be perfect folly to expect the man to breathe naturally in that condition. In fact, it would be a physiological impossibility; because, there is a partial paralysis of the respiratory organs. But call in the surgeon, let him apply the Trephine; and remove the broken bone from the injured brain; and immediately the patient opens his eyes, breathes freely, and for the first time, since the accident occurred, is conscious of his situation.

And it would be equally useless, to try to believe or to make another believe, while there are positive obstructions, in the way of faith. But, remove the cause of unbelief, take away the debris of error, ignorance and prejudice from the clouded brain, and it will become perfectly easy and natural to believe. The necessity of trying to believe, is itself, an evidence of unbelief. Suppose, for instance, you were

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to promise me some favor, and I should say, I will try,—I will try very hard to believe your word. Would you not think that the harder I had to try, the less I really did believe you?

Then stop *trying* to believe, and just *believe* now! A little child once said, "Faith, is taking God at his word, and asking no questions." It is that child-like simplicity, that gratefully accepts the promise, and thus receives the blessing. Perhaps you are ready to exclaim, "Must I then ignore my reason and consciousness, in order to receive this grace?" No, not for a moment. You are to follow the dictates of an enlightened reason, just as far as reason can lead you in the way of truth, and then to proceed by naked faith in the direction that revelation points, right onward to the cross. Neither are you required to repudiate consciousness, in the exercise of saving faith. But you must study consciousness in the natural order and fully appreciate its teachings, if you would be true to yourself and faithful to God.

Notice, the deep, long-felt consciousness of personal need,—the hunger and thirst of your soul,—the aspiration of your nature, to be filled with all the fullness of God. Consider, the profound and growing consciousness of a Divine presence and power, by which, this great want of your panting spirit can be supplied. Then endeavor to realize the blessed consciousness of heart purity and perfect love, this satisfying portion of the soul. Let go every other refuge, lay hold on Christ, by simple faith, and look for the promise of the Father,—the descent of the Holy Ghost.

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And remember, you cannot be conscious of an experience which you have not yet attained, but, you must believe in order to receive it, and you will be conscious of its reception, the very moment that you do believe. "Whatsoever things ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them and ye shall have them."

MOTIVES FOR SEEKING IT.

The great object of doctrinal discussion, is not simply to ascertain truth, but also to prepare the way for practical results. It is not sufficient that we know our duty, but we must do it, and that, according to the best light that we can gain. In view of this solemn responsibility, it may be well to consider some of the motives, for seeking this deeper work of grace.

These are numerous and impressive, but, we can notice only a few of them in this brief essay;

1. The symmetry and perfection of moral character will be greatly promoted by this experience. "That ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God." A perfect development of Christian manhood, must of course, depend very much upon the vitalizing and, expansive forces of grace in the soul; and, where these exist in a high degree, there will be a corresponding improvement in the life. The inspired ideal of Christian character, is noble and elevated. The righteous shall flourish like a palm tree, he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon. The Palm tree is tall, upright, flourishing and fruit-bearing. It will not

be pressed or bound down or grow crooked, though heavy weights be laid on it. And likewise the Christian, when richly endowed with grace, will bear the the heavy burdens of life, and always stand erect amid the storm. The cedar is a large and noble evergreen tree. It is much celebrated in the scriptures, and is called, "the glory of Lebanon." The cedars of Lebanon are grand old trees; lofty and commanding in appearance, and having stood for many centuries, they suggest the idea of majesty, stability, and incorruptibility. And thus, the trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, shall flourish in the courts of our God, upon the virgin soil of purity. The dignity and perfection of Christian character, will command attention, inspire confidence and secure commendation of all good and true men.

But there is evidently a great deal of moral imperfection in the church,—much that is one sided, ill-shapen and unattractive; and which ought, if possible, to be remedied immediately. As, in nature, we often see an apple or some other fruit, that is knarled and defective on one side, so, in the kingdom of grace, we sometimes meet with professors of religion, who are rough and crooked, cramped and twisted out of all due proportions. Now, if these unfortunate ones, should become entirely sanctified and perfected in love, it would certainly be a great blessing to themselves, a satisfaction to their fellow Christians, and a relief to the suffering cause of Christ.

Symmetry and perfection are more important, than one might at first suppose. Take, for illustration,

the case of a man, whose limbs are of unequal length; it gives him an unsightly appearance, an awkward gait and a slow pace. And there are some Christians, who labor under a similar defect, the right limb of their religion is too short,—they are not entirely sanctified, and as a natural consequence, they go limping and halting all the way through life. “Ye are yet carnal; for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and *walk as men?*” Full salvation, will not only give beauty and attractiveness to our piety, but strength and courage also to stand up for Jesus at all times, to walk in all His ordinances blameless, and to run with diligence and delight in the way of his commandments.

2. Another motive for the earnest pursuit of this blessing is the increase and constancy of religious enjoyment, which it affords. “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.” That is, they shall receive his special favor. Holiness and happiness are inseparably connected, and generally exist in the same degree. So that, perfect felicity cannot be realized apart from entire moral purity; and on the other hand, entire sanctification and perfect love, will secure the highest possible beatitude. It is perfectly reasonable to believe, that an increase of saving grace will promote our enjoyment; and that, when we become fully established in the higher life, we shall possess a constancy of holy joy. “Rejoice ever more, pray without ceasing, and in every thing give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus

concerning you." Mr. Wesley, in his Notes, upon this passage says, "This is Christian perfection. Farther than this we cannot go: and we need not stop short of it. Our Lord has purchased joy as well as righteousness for us." Complete and uninterrupted happiness, is the blood-bought privilege of the Christian, and when his heart is right and pure before God, such will be his blessed experience. Not that we shall then be exempt from all temptation and trials of every kind, for the servant is not above his Lord. But, we shall be so happily conscious of a Divine presence and protection, as to fear no evil and remain perfectly calm, amid all the conflicts and perils of life. "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee." "In the world ye shall have tribulation, but in me ye shall have peace." This is verified to all that put their trust in him, and especially to those who are fully saved.

"Should storms of wrath shake earth and sea,
Their minds have heaven and peace within."

When Peter attempted to walk alone, upon the troubled sea of Galilee, he began to sink, but arm in arm with Jesus, his step was firm and he felt no fear. The only place of security and peace, is near the throbbing heart of infinite love!

The blessed Saviour seems to challenge our confidence, when he says, "Ask and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full." Even the Psalmist, under a less perfect dispensation, could

affirm, "They shall be abundantly satisfied, with the fatness of thine house." And consonant with these precious promises, is the apostolic injunction, "Rejoice always, and again I say rejoice." This boundless and abiding joy, is born of an ever present and full salvation. It is the overflowing gladness of a soul that can truthfully sing,—

"Jesus saves, oh bliss sublime,
Jesus saves me all the time."

3. An additional consideration for the attainment of complete holiness, is, that it constitutes the very best qualification for usefulness. It is pre-eminently a baptism of divine love, which constrains us to work for Christ, and wonderfully inspires our efforts to do good. The most important endowment and the chief element of power, in a minister of religion, is deep and earnest piety. No amount of genius, mental culture, or social position, can atone for the lack of this. Personal holiness has been imperatively required, under every dispensation of the Divine economy, as a qualification for the sacred office.

When Jehovah was about to enter into covenant with Abram, he said unto him, "I am the Almighty God: walk before me, and be thou perfect;" thus, indicating the necessity of moral excellence, in the person who was to establish the gracious compact, between God and his chosen people. When Isaiah was to be prepared for his prophetic office, he beheld in a vision, the glory of the Lord, and overwhelmed with a sense of his own unworthiness he

exclaimed,—“Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips.” “Then flew one of the Seraphim unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar; and he laid it on my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away and thy sin purged. Also, I heard the voice of the Lord saying, whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me.” Holiness inspires confidence and intensifies our devotion. Before the prophet felt the touch of holy fire, he dared not move, but when the purifying baptism came upon his soul, he was ready for any work that God might require him to do.

And, when the apostles of Christ, were to be qualified for their great mission, the divine Master said, “Tarry ye at Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.” “Ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.” And, “Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you.” Ten days subsequently these promises were fulfilled, under the following circumstances. “When the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the

Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." This was evidently the promised power,—a plenary endowment of the Holy Ghost, and a special qualification for their great life-work, as the apostles of Christianity.

A new, strange power attended their ministry ever after, and the most signal prosperity crowned their labors. Thousands were converted in a single day, and the great revival swept like fire, over all the land. Scribes, Pharisees and learned Rabbis, were discomfited by the humble fishermen of Galilee, and constrained to accept the Christian faith. The proud Romans, the boastful Greeks, and the unbelieving Jews alike, were convicted of sin and humbled in the dust, at the feet of the once despised Nazarene. Thus the impetuous tide of salvation rolled on, daily increasing in volume and force, until it not only filled Jerusalem, with the doctrine of "Jesus and the resurrection;" but, shook the Roman Empire, from centre to circumference, with its regal power, and astonished the world, by the rising glory of Messiah's name.

And, in all subsequent periods; as the Church has measured up to her privilege in Christian experience, she has been a power for good in the world. Nowhere, perhaps, is this more fully manifest, than in the early history of Methodism. There were giants in those days, and they wrought wonders among the people. It was not their great talents, or finished culture, or high social position, that gave

them this power, but it was the unction of the Holy Ghost upon their hearts. And to-day, we need more than any thing else, a general revival of experimental and practical holiness, in the Church. It will inspire our ministers, with a purer zeal for God and a greater love for souls; it will preserve our people from the spirit of worldliness and the reckless greed for gain, so characteristic of the present times; and it will prompt that self-sacrificing devotion and generous liberality, which are so indispensable, for the conversion of the world to Christ.

4. Still another reason for seeking entire sanctification, is the greater security from back-sliding which it affords. Holiness is the normal condition of the Christian life. "Be ye holy, for I am holy." "Holiness becometh thine house, O Lord, for ever." It is self-evident, that a healthy state of the soul, as well as of the body, is not only more comfortable, but also more secure, than a sickly one. A delicate and enervated system is much more liable to contract disease, than one, which is perfectly healthy. And a half sick man, is just as likely to grow worse, if not more so, than to get well. Heart-purity affords increased power, to resist evil of every kind, such as, the temptations of satan and the base allurements of the world. There is now no inordinate desire, no inherent tendency to wrong doing, but a powerful affinity for that which is right, and pure, and good, in the sight of God. "His delight is in the law of the Lord, and in it doth he meditate day and night."

A deep religious experience, is always distinguished by an exalted appreciation of divine things, and a faithful attendance upon the means of grace. Then, the service of God, is not an irksome task, but a delightful privilege. "To be spiritually minded is life and peace." But, a low state of piety, almost inevitably, leads to disaffection, neglect of Christian duties, and tampering with forbidden fruit. The nearer we live to the world, the more powerful will be its influence upon us, and the greater our danger of apostacy from Christ. "To be carnally minded is death."

Those who are perfect in love, will not "fall out by the way," and thus suffer loss, but they will "keep the unity of the Spirit in the bonds of peace." Not only so, they will manifest a spirit of fraternal kindness and holy charity toward all men. It is truly wonderful, how this experience improves our estimate of other Christians; we now, see in them greater excellencies, and fewer defects,—they are nearer and dearer to us, than ever before. If the old adage be true, "In union there is strength," then is this, "a three-fold cord, not easily broken;" for, there are no centralizing affinities, like the pure love of Christ in the soul. The family or the Church, that is held together by this holy attraction, is divinely secure.

But, where this bond of union is wanting and the vital forces are defective, there will be disintegration, decay and death. There are many in the Church to-day, who have "left their first love,"

and have sadly declined in spirituality and religious enjoyment. With a sad countenance and a doleful accent, they now sing:—

“What peaceful hours I once enjoyed !

How sweet their mem’ry still !

But they have left an aching void

The world can never fill.”

The Christian world is full of back-sliders, men and women who once were happy in the love of God and on their way to heaven,—some of them have filled important official positions in the Church; but, they have “turned from the holy commandment delivered unto them,” they have “crucified the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame,” they have “drawn back unto perdition.” And they are now like apostate angels, more painfully conscious of their degradation and ruin, on account of the dignity from which they have fallen.

The important question has been started,—and I trust it may rest with increasing weight, upon the conscience of the Church, “What becomes of all our probationers?” Some of them no doubt ascertain, in a little while that they have not been converted, hence they drop out of line; others back-slide in a short time, from various causes, the chief of which, may be, the want of spirituality in the Church, but a large number go to take the places of older members, who have been dreaming over the self-indulgent idea of *growing* into the grace of entire sanctification, until they

have grown out of all grace, and out of the Church too,—just as chronic invalids, grow into consumptives and dead men!

If we would retain our converts, build up the Church and save the world, we must have the Pentecostal baptism, of holiness and love. Then our pulpits will be clothed with power and glow with scintillations of divine light, the responsive shout of holy joy will come back from the pews, and our churches will soon be wrapped in a blaze of glory. Then our meetings will become so interesting and attractive, that we shall require no compulsory measures to secure attendance, but multitudes will gather around the standard of Christ, chanting as they come,—“I was glad when they said unto me, let us go into the house of the Lord. Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O, Jerusalem.” A deep and rich experience of religion, is the grand secret of moral power and spiritual prosperity.

Then let us take heed, to the apostolic injunction, “And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from

his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure; for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. ”

5. The last incentive to the acquisition of full salvation, that we shall notice, is, that it gives to its possessor, the brightest possible prospect for the future.

The Scriptures clearly teach, that there are degrees of perfection and felicity in heaven; and that these depend upon the development of moral character and fidelity to God, in the present life. “As one star differeth from another star in glory, so also is the resurrection of the dead,” or the condition of the saints in the resurrection state. “They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.” Here we observe a marked distinction, between those who simply embrace the true wisdom, and others, who in addition to personal piety, labor for the glory of God, in the salvation of their fellow men. The first, are saved with celestial honor, but, the second receive a most brilliant coronation,—a crown of fadeless stars. Then again, we read of some, who “shall be saved as by fire,”—barely saved; and of others, to whom “an abundant entrance shall be ministered,”—who shall be triumphantly received.

This is just what we might expect, when we contemplate the varied results, of gracious endowment in the present life. There is a great diversity in the experience of professing Christians, and this depends chiefly upon their own voluntary choice and action. We do not expect those who neglect their duty, to be equally happy, with others, who live up to their privileges and obligations. And, it would be quite as unreasonable, and unscriptural too, for us to suppose, that a man can willfully neglect to seek full salvation in this life, and yet receive the benefits of it in the world to come. He will pass for just what he is worth, and no more, either on earth or in heaven.

It would be an act of simple justice, if one, who gave his heart to God in the morning of life, and has been a faithful, consistent and self-sacrificing Christian all his days, should receive a brighter crown of glory, than another, who has spent all his time, talents, substance and influence in the service of satan, and in his last moments is "plucked as a brand from the eternal burning." It would not only be unrighteous to place them upon an equality in heaven, and give to each the same reward, but it would be absolutely impossible, according to the established laws of the divine economy, to make them alike happy and glorious, even in the same mansion of light, and surrounded by the same external circumstances.

Personal character, moral purity, the condition and development of the soul, these must determine

our future destiny. The decisions of the judgment will depend, upon what we are, in ourselves. The nature that is most highly cultivated in grace, that is brought into the closest and fullest harmony with God, and that derives the purest and sweetest satisfaction from personal communion with Christ, in the present life, that soul must also be the happiest in the paradise above. If this be true, and we may rest assured it is, then we have motives high as heaven, vast as eternity and magnificent as "the inheritance of the Saints in light," to seek the blessing of perfect love.

1. "Lo ! round the throne, a glorious band,
The Saints in countless myriads stand ;
Of every tongue redeem'd to God,
Array'd in garments wash'd in blood.
2. Through tribulation great they came ; .
They bore the cross, despised the shame ;
But now from all their labors rest,
In God's eternal glory blest."

MEANS OF RETAINING IT.

There are many who once enjoyed this experience and have lost it. Some have regained it several times, and after all, are now destitute of it. As, some of the angelic host, "kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, and were cast down ;" and our first parents fell from their original purity, and were banished from their Eden-home ; so, the holiest and best Christians, are exposed to temptation and liable to fall from grace.

The conditions of retaining entire sanctification, are similar to those by which it was first obtained. A complete submission to the will of God, and abiding faith in Christ, are always indispensable to present salvation.

1. If you would retain this special grace, you must not be ashamed to confess it. "The fear of man bringeth a snare." We are sometimes over sensitive, and too careful of our reputation.

Many are willing to suffer for Christ, in their property or person, but, not in their good name, or the estimation of their fellow men. They would shun the cross, and thus avoid the reproach of the gospel. And yet, the great Exemplar, "For the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame." The agony of the cross required endurance, but its reproach merited only his sovereign contempt. Perhaps, there is no single event in all the life of Christ, that exhibits the moral grandeur of his character to better advantage, than his complete victory over the shame of the cross. Then let us not be ashamed to confess him, nor forget that calvary is the way to glory.

A public confession is important, not only on account of the principles which it involves, but it demonstrates our faith, and love and moral courage, and thus benefits others. Some will be more deeply impressed by the testimony of personal experience, than by all the preaching that they may hear. Alfred Cookman once said, "Before I embraced

this doctrine, I could explain away every thing, excepting my Mother's experience, that was an unanswerable argument." And, if we can wield this logic of the Holy Ghost, which is so irresistible, should we not employ it, on all proper occasions, for the glory of God and the benefit of our brethren? But let us do it with meekness and humility; so as to give the least possible offence to any, and do the greatest amount of good to all. Let us confess what Christ has done, rather than profess what we are, or proclaim what we can do. This testimony should not be forced, or obtrusive, or untimely. It must be free from every thing like boasting, or self-confidence, or assumed superiority. And let us remember that, while it is always a privilege and often a duty to speak, it is sometimes most profitable to keep quiet ourselves, listen to others, and commune with God.

2. Let your consecration be continuous and co-extensive with your increasing light. "The altar sanctifieth the gift." Let your offering remain upon the altar, and it will continue to be sanctified.

The sacrifice once made is not to be recalled or even regretted for a moment, but gladly, cheerfully continued. Like a loving and dutiful wife, far from repenting of her choice, or wishing to withdraw her plighted affection, would renew her affiance every day, so the purified soul, having consecrated all to Christ and that forever, has no thought or desire to withhold any part of the price, but if the sacred pledge had not been made, he would make it

immediately, and esteem it an honor and a privilege to do so. The divine Master can do so much better for us, than what we can do for ourselves, why should we not rejoice to commit all our interests into his hands, and leave them there?

“Thine would I live—thine would I die ;

Be thine through all eternity.”

This consecration must be made and continued, in the spirit of self-denial. We must be uncompromising in our fidelity to Christ, and avoid all entangling alliances with the world. “Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing ; and I will receive you.” It is not sufficient that we deny ourselves of that which is positively sinful, but we must also refrain from things which are doubtful. “He that doubteth is condemned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith, for whatsoever is not of faith is sin.” It is not safe or expedient for any Christian, especially for one professing entire purity, to indulge in every gratification which is not *expressly* forbidden in the word of God. We should carefully avoid every thing of evil tendency, “Abstain from all appearance of evil.”

3. Keep your faith in lively exercise,—cultivate a realizing sense of the Divine presence. “Have faith in God.” Faith in his power and willingness to save unto the uttermost.

We are brought into this state of salvation, by one simple act of true faith, and we must then maintain this degree of spiritual life, by a constant exer-

cise of that faith. "The life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God." Faith is the vital bond between God and his children, and by this medium, life purity and love flow into the believing heart. "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will and it shall be done unto you." But, if at any time we let go our faith in Christ, we shall certainly loose the witness of full salvation, and with it a measure of moral power. "*We stand by faith.*"

This faith will enable us to live, in constant delightful communion with God, and to realize the answering baptism of Divine power, whenever we call upon his name. "If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." And it is a self-evident fact, that the more happy and fully satisfied we are with our condition, the less likely we shall be to change it for another. The language of our hearts would be,—“Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias.” Let us pitch our tents, and remain in this hallowed spot,—in this celestial company!

“’Tis there I would always abide,
And never a moment depart,—
Conceal’d in the cleft of thy side,
Eternally held in thy heart.”

4. As you wish to retain the perfection of gracious endowment, you must go on to the perfection

of Christian maturity,—“unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.”

There is no neutrality in religion,—no standing still in the spiritual life. We must either advance or retrograde. In order that you may keep your heart pure and your life right, you must grow in grace and ripen for eternal glory. Many have lost their entire purity, because they have not pressed onward to perfect maturity. A regenerate soul must grow in grace, if it would live and retain the normal standard of health ; and, it may thus attain a certain kind and degree of maturity. The entirely sanctified soul, must also grow in grace, to retain its life, purity and power ; and by this development, may attain the highest possible perfection, of Christian manhood. “Perfect and complete in all the will of God.”

Complete heart-purity, is the best possible preparation for growth in grace, and the attainment of Christian maturity. There can be no doubt that, if the brambles of sin are entirely removed from the garden of the soul, then the blossoms of hope and the fruits of faith, will exhibit a more luxuriant growth and perfect development. “Every branch that beareth fruit, he pruneth it that it may bring forth more fruit.” This is God’s method of proceeding, with his faithful servants. He rewards our former obedience and devotion, by making us more holy and competent for farther and more eminent services. And as the entirely sanctified, possess

the richest endowments of grace, and are capable of the highest spiritual development, so are they also, much more responsible for the diligent improvement of their talents. "For unto whom much is given, of him shall much be required."

"O that each from his Lord may receive the
glad word,—

Well and faithfully done !

Enter into my joy, and sit down on my throne."

5. The daily reading of God's word, and an intimate acquaintance with its teachings upon this subject, will be conducive to your stability and progress in the life of purity, "Search the scriptures; for they testify of me."

Perfect holiness gives a keen relish for spiritual things, and requires fresh supplies every day. The Bible is a store-house of heavenly manna,—a well of living water. It is precisely adapted to our wants, and inexhaustable in its resources. "The water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." Those who cherish the profoundest reverence for the Divine oracles, and are most careful to follow their precepts, will be least likely to err from the way of truth and duty. The Bible is the guiding star, in the pathway of holiness. It is the source of all clear light, the standard of Christian obligation, and the pledge of eternal life. The teachings of men, the lessons of experience, and even the promptings of the blessed Holy Spirit, are to be tested and proved by the written word. It is true that the

leadings of the Spirit will always be in perfect harmony with Divine revelation; but we need the light of the Bible to assist us in distinguishing between the promptings of the Holy Ghost and the exercises of our own minds. "Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee." Like Wesley, be "a man of one book," and let no one beguile you from the simplicity of the gospel. Pay no attention to dreams, and visions and special revelations, for that dispensation is past, and the true light now shineth. Don't attach undue importance to sudden impressions, or impulses, or presentiments. "We have a more sure word of prophecy; where unto ye do well to take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place."

CONCLUSION.

After this somewhat extended presentation of the subject, in its doctrinal aspects and practical bearings, will you allow me, in conclusion, a few suggestive remarks?

If at any time you should be tempted, to ignore your loyalty to Methodism, to antagonize the doctrine of Christian perfection, or in any way to interfere with those who are endeavoring to spread Scriptural holiness over the land; let me commend you to the sage advice of old Doctor Gamaliel. "Refrain from these men, and let them alone; for

if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought; but if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest happily ye be found even to fight against God."

And, to those who advocate this faith and enjoy this blessed experience, I would kindly suggest,—let us not get nervous about the opposition to this doctrine, nor be impatient of contradiction, by those who differ from us in opinion, nor deprecate a free, honest, manly and Christian discussion of the subject. Because, we are sure, it will bear the most rigid analysis,—the most thorough investigation, and will certainly triumph in every fair contest.

It requires no special pleading, no sharp practice, no begging of the question, no secret conclave, no party shibboleth, to sustain and perpetuate the good old Pauline doctrine, of Christian perfection. But, on the other hand, it positively defies all legitimate controversy, and no amount of sophistical reasoning can for one moment shake, its impregnable foundations.

Go, put it into the crucible, apply the severest tests, intensify the blaze seven-fold, then let the unbelieving and gain-saying multitudes draw nigh and look into the burning fiery furnace. And behold, one like unto the Son of man, is walking side by side with those beautiful angels of light,—Divine truth, Incarnate purity and Perfect love, amid the flames; and be ye assured that, they shall come forth out of the royal furnace, without even the smell of fire upon their white robes!

This doctrine, like the Bible, and the divine Author of both, can afford to wait, if need be, until its antagonists, great and small, shall have passed from the scenes of earth and the records of time ; and will then proceed, to build the imperishable monuments of its glory and power, over the graves of the buried past, just as if no one had ever dared to lift his voice, or wield a pen against it. " There are many devices in a man's heart ; nevertheless the counsel of the Lord, *that shall stand.* "

And from the sun-lit towers of its strength, the faithful ambassadors of Christ, shall unfurl the blood-stained banner of the cross, to the enraptured thousands of oncoming generations, proclaiming as ever,—“ Holiness unto the Lord, ” and full salvation to man ; until He, whose right it is, shall reign unrivaled in the hearts of all, and sway his peaceful scepter over the nations of the world !

“ flung to the heedless winds,
Or on the waters cast,
The martyrs' ashes, watched,
Shall gathered be at last ;
And from that scattered dust,
Around us and abroad,
Shall spring a plenteous seed
Of witnesses for God.”

APPENDIX.

DISCUSSIONS IN THE PREACHERS' MEETING.

Subsequent to the reading of this essay before the Preachers Meeting, the subject was taken up for discussion, and continued for some two months. And I here present my chief arguments in that debate, as they will reflect some additional light, upon many interesting points.

A. "Some teach that, entire sanctification differs, both in nature and degree from regeneration, and amounts to a second conversion."

It may be true that some do so teach; but, let it be distinctly understood that, we do not. So far from it, we say emphatically, that primary sanctification is concomitant with regeneration, but entire sanctification, is subsequently obtained by faith in Christ. It is not a second conversion, but, it is a second and complete sanctification.

B. "Being born again implies a real change and true holiness."

Certainly, it is a real and great change, and implies true holiness; but, true holiness is not perfect holiness, any more than true love is perfect love.

Any degree of sincere love is true love, but it requires a high degree of love to constitute perfect love. And likewise, real holiness may exist in a limited degree, or it may be increased and intensified to the highest degree, and that, is the perfection of holiness. Entire sanctification, is the completion of a work already begun in spiritual regeneration.

C. "According to Wesley, entire sanctification is both instantaneous and gradual."

Properly speaking, that is simply impossible, for an event cannot be both instantaneous and gradual. *Instantaneous* means, "done in an instant; in a moment; in an indivisible point of time. *Gradual* means, "proceeding by steps or degrees; advancing step by step; passing from one step to another; regular and slow." Thus we see that literally, an event cannot occur both instantaneously and gradually. But, Mr. Wesley, evidently used these terms in an accommodated sense, and explains himself. He says, "a man may be said to be dying for some time, but there is an instant when he ceases to live; and so, a man may be dying to sin for some time, but there is a moment when it ceases to exist." Again, he says, "as to the manner. I believe this perfection is always wrought in the soul, by a simple act of faith, consequently in an instant." Hence, it appears that Mr. Wesley, believed that entire sanctification or Christian perfection, is obtained by simple faith instantaneously, and that we may grow in grace, both before and after its attainment. And so do we believe and teach.

D. "It is claimed by some, that entire sanctification is necessary as a preparation for heaven. And in proof they quote, "Follow holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord."

That text is scarcely applicable in this connection because, I think, it refers to practical piety, and not to the experience of entire sanctification directly. But, complete purity of heart, is an essential qualification for heaven. "Be ye holy for I am holy. "Be ye perfect, like as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." "And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth." These and similar Scriptures, appear to settle this point, beyond all legitimate controversy.

Do you ask, "what then becomes of those who die in a merely justified state?"

We reply, they are qualified for heaven by Divine prerogative, just like children dying in infancy. Both, infants and justified believers, by virtue of their gracious relations to Christ, are in a condition where God can freely bestow upon them, any requisite qualification, without violating the principles of his moral government. Original or birth-sin is our misfortune, and not our fault, until we make it such by voluntary choice or a willful rejection of Christ.

Infants are fully covered by the atonement, and as they are incapable of faith or moral action, must be saved unconditionally. The justified believer has placed himself, by faith in Christ, under the cove-

nant of grace, and thus secures the present and prospective benefits of that covenant. As an infant is free from personal guilt, and also from the corruption acquired by actual sin, but has a depraved nature, or a heart in which there are tendencies to moral evil; so a justified believer, is absolved from personal guilt, cleansed from the corruption acquired by actual transgression, and renewed in his moral nature, but, he is not entirely sanctified;—there are still remaining some carnal, sin-ward tendencies in his soul.

Legally regarded, they both sustain precisely the same relation to the moral administration of Jehovah; and hence, in case of death, must derive similar benefits. But, it is vastly different with the impenitent and unbelieving, for they have not only sinned and incurred the Divine displeasure, but they have placed themselves beyond the covenant of mercy, by rejecting Christ; and therefore, they are “without God and without hope in the world.”

Here let us observe that, there is a marked distinction, between the necessary *conditions* of salvation, and the essential *qualifications* for heaven. Where the conditions are fully met, God can at any moment give the qualifications, but, if the conditions are not fulfilled, he has no prerogative to impart the requisite qualifications, in any case. I am perfectly aware of the fact, that this word, “condition” has a variety of significations, and that its primary sense is, “state; a particular mode of being;” and that it may be applied to moral qualities. But, we do not

intend to slide from one sense into another, nor allow you to do so, if we can help it. When we speak of the conditions of salvation, we mean, the terms of contract or covenant. And, are we not correct, in affirming that, when the specified conditions or terms of the covenant are fulfilled, that the stipulated benefits cannot fail to be secured?

It is a serious question, how far a believer may knowingly and willfully neglect to seek that purity and perfection which the gospel enjoins, and yet retain his justification in the sight of God. For we read of some, who shall be saved, “as by fire.” Again, “not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.” As a complete justification by faith, accompanied with regeneration, ensures eternal life; and on the other hand, an impaired justification renders final salvation precarious, so entire sanctification makes “assurance *doubly* sure.” Because, it not only lessens the danger of apostacy, but also affords an abiding consciousness of personal fitness for heaven, as well as a legal claim, under the economy of Divine grace. “Wherefore, the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure.”

But, I presume, after all that can be said, some will risk getting to heaven, *as by fire*. Let us hope that many others, will choose the more excellent way, “perfecting holiness in the fear of God;” and thus secure to themselves, a triumphant entrance

into glory and a star-gemmed crown of immortality.

E. The author said, "We cannot grow into any condition of grace, either regeneration or entire sanctification, but we may develop and mature in all degrees of gracious endowment."

I suppose, it will be conceded by all, that spiritual life, divine love and moral purity are gifts from God, and freely conferred upon us, just like intellect or genius, in the natural world. We do not grow into the possessions of our intellectual faculties, they are natural endowments, but, we may grow in the development of those powers. And so, the gracious elements of our moral or spiritual nature, are endowments received from God. They are *obtained* by faith, and not *attained* by good works, or spiritual growth or Christian culture. All degrees of saving grace, from the lowest to the highest, are received from above. They are, strictly speaking *obtainments* and not *attainments*, either in whole or in part.

This is corroborated by our general observation and experience. I have been in the ministry about twenty-five years, and have never yet known any one to grow into the regenerate or the entirely sanctified state. Not a single case in all this time ! And, if I should hereafter find one, I would certainly regard it as a very remarkable exception to the general rule. For I am quite sure, that Christians generally, are born of the Spirit into the regenerate state ; and also, that those who obtain full salvation, are baptised by the Holy Ghost, into this higher condition of the new life.

If even it be possible to grow into entire sanctification, it is certainly a very slow and unsatisfactory process. For it is a fact, that a great many persons have been "hoping against hope," to attain it in this way; and have not yet attained it, after twenty, thirty or forty years of growth in grace. Strange, passing strange, it seems to me, that during all these long, sad years, of "hope deferred," that "maketh the heart sick," they have not at some time waked up to the happy thought, that there must be another, a better and a shorter way to gain "the long sought rest."

On the other hand, hundreds, thousands of living witnesses to-day can and do testify that, they have obtained this grace, by simple faith in Christ. These persons had been converted before, and we have been accustomed to receive and rejoice in their testimony on that point; we had no just cause to doubt their veracity then,—pray why are they less worthy of credence now, when they bear witness to a richer and higher experience of religion?

F. "Regeneration consists in the restoration of the image of God upon the soul, but the image of God must be perfect, therefore, all who are in the regenerate state must also be entirely sanctified."

The perfection of an image, will depend in part, at least, upon the material on which it is impressed. A wood cut is always less perfect than a lithograph or a steel engraving, and yet, it may be a likeness, and in some respects a very good one too. We should not expect to find a plaster of paris figure

equal in perfection to a fine marble statue. Like wise, I presume, an unfallen angel may be a more perfect image of God, than even a glorified Spirit and certainly superior to one still in the flesh, and subject to various infirmities.

Is it not equally true, that an entirely sanctified soul, is a better image of God, than one who is but partially purified? Also, that one who has been truly converted, and afterward declines in spirituality, and yet, retains a limited measure of grace, is still as a child of God, and bears some resemblance to the Divine image, though it may be very imperfect?

If these statements be correct, and I do not see that there is any defect in them, then it would follow, as a just and logical conclusion that, the moral image of God may exist in the human soul, more or less perfectly. A man may be regenerated, born of the Spirit, the image of God is then certainly restored, but, it does not follow that he is also entirely sanctified, or that the Divine likeness then exists, in its highest possible perfection.

Let us not forget that, there are successive degrees of purity and perfection, in the Christian life. It is one thing to receive "the washing of regeneration," and another to be "sanctified through and through." It is a blessed privilege to be made "partakers of the divine nature," but it is still more glorious to "be filled with all the fulness of God." It is a mark of distinction to be "sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise," but it is a much higher dignity

to "be perfect, like as your Father who is in heaven is perfect."

G. "The indulgence of an evil thought involves the concurrence of the will, and therefore, it is an act, a sinful act to all intents and purposes. 'Who-soever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.' Again, 'If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.'"

This looks very plausible and, no doubt, some would consider it quite conclusive; but, let us see whether it does not need some qualification. There is an essential difference between an act of the mind and a movement of the body. A simple thought is an act of the mind. That thought may produce a wrong sensation, without the concurrence of the will, even in antagonism to our volitions; but, it is not until the sensation thus produced is sanctioned by the will that guilt is incurred. In the case of external action it is very different, a movement of the body, necessarily, involves the concurrence of the will, because, external physical action is controlled by the voluntary nerves, if these be paralyzed by accident or disease the power of motion is lost; while at the same time, the power of sensation or feeling remains, because the sensory or involuntary nerves are uninjured. Thus you see, that a movement or action of the body, necessarily, implies a concurrent volition.

But an act of the mind, an evil thought, producing a wrong feeling or a ruffled temper may exist, with

out the consent of the will, perhaps, in spite of our volition to the contrary. We have heard men say, "I bit my lips that I might hold my tongue." There was a hard fight with self and sin; but, a partial, if not a complete victory was achieved, by the controlling power of the will; notwithstanding the existence of evil thoughts and disturbed sensibilities. "Be ye angry and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath."

Now, let us endeavor to secure a true and careful exegesis of the above passages; and I will present reliable authorities. Dr. Clarke says, on Matt. 5, 28. "Whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her,—*Epithumasai autan, earnestly to covet her.* The verb *Epithumeo* is undoubtedly used here by our Lord, in the sense of *coveting* through the influence of *impure desire*. It is the earnest wish or desire of the soul, which, in a variety of cases, constitutes the *good* or *evil* of an *act*. If a man earnestly wish to commit an evil, but cannot, because God puts *time* *place* and *opportunity* out of his power, he is fully-chargeable with the iniquity of the act, by that God who searches and judges the heart. So, if a man earnestly wish to do some kindness, which it is out of his power to perform, the act is considered as *his*; because God in this case, as in that above, takes the *will* for the *deed*."

If an object of attraction or desire be presented, it may suggest an evil thought to the mind, and that may awaken an impure desire in the heart; then, if the will concurs, sanctions and approves it,—if it al-

lows the eye to rest upon the forbidden object to lust after it or earnestly to covet its possession, there can be no doubt of personal guilt, in such a case. But, if the will promptly interposes, arrests the eye and turns it away from the exciting cause of these evil thoughts and impure desires, thus suppressing and driving them away; though there has been temptation, an inclination toward moral evil and, perhaps, great danger of falling, yet there has been no actual sin committed.

Dr. Whedon, on the same text says, "where the will consents, and the volition permits the sensual feeling. Yet not every glance of admiration or desire, cast upon the beauty of one of the opposite sex is here condemned. But when from a sentiment it becomes a sensation, the *danger commences*. If the sensation be volitionally permitted, there is guilt. If nothing but opportunity were wanting to the guilty act, the adultery of the heart is fully committed. God who sees the heart, holds the hidden man guilty."

This, you will observe, fully corroborates what we have said upon this point. The admiration of womanly grace and beauty, which is perfectly innocent in itself, may become the source of temptation, by suggesting an evil thought, that thought may stir the sensibilities and awaken an impure desire, here the danger begins, and if the volition does not quickly interpose guilt is contracted; and, if the will positively sanction the evil desire, then the sin of the heart is fully committed. But, if the will in its sub-

lime majesty says, to that evil thought, "stop," there is a sudden pause, and to the excited sensibilities, "peace, be still,"—there is a great calm in the soul; and the man is saved from committing sin, either in heart or life. It is true, these are nice distinctions, but they are real and of vast practical importance; and, it is impossible to adjust the theology of this question, unless we comprehend and keep them in view.

The other passage, above quoted, is still more unfortunate, in this connection. Psal. 66. 18. "If I regard iniquity in my heart,"—Dr. Clarke, says, "If I have seen iniquity in my heart, if I have known it was there, and *encouraged it*; If I *pretended to be* what I *was not*; If I loved iniquity, while I *professed* to pray and *be sorry for my sins*: the Lord would not have heard, and I should have been left without hope or support." Now, whatever else may be taught in this text, it certainly does not teach that, an evil thought may not exist in the soul, without incurring positive guilt and certain condemnation.

There is another consideration bearing upon this point, to which I would direct attention, for a few moments. What will my worthy opponent do with those naughty babes, in the church at Corinth, upon his theory? They were even worse than what I have allowed, and not half so good as he claims that all must be, in order to retain their justification. For, they had evil thoughts, irregular desires and bad tempers; St. Paul says, that they had, "*Envy*

and *strife*, and *divisions*, and, "*walked as men*," and hence, were certainly "*carnal*." And yet, he addresses them as "*brethren*," and denominates them, "*babes in Christ*," as their most appropriate title, and expressive of their real condition.

No one, I presume, would claim that they were entirely sanctified; they were not even in the normal, healthy condition of the regenerate state. But, it appears that notwithstanding the existence of these unholy passions, and glaring inconsistencies, which the apostle cites as evidence of remaining carnality, they were still in a state of grace,—"*babes in Christ*."

The opposition are much more concerned, to look after those troublesome babes, and to settle the controversy between themselves and St. Paul, than I am. The great apostle and myself have no misunderstanding about this matter. I reverently bow to his inspired authority, and am perfectly satisfied, to let those erring ones, however imperfect, remain just where he has placed them, within the fold of Christ. And, I doubt exceedingly, whether my opponent can do better, if even he would dare to do any thing else. Yet, if he assumes this position, it will certainly prove fatal to his argument, but, I am sure it will be a corresponding improvement in his theology. So that after all, he will gain much by the exchange, for truth is better than victory!

H. Now, perhaps, I had better look after that key-stone of the arch, which was represented as being so seriously injured, that not only the arch itself

but the entire superstructure of my essay, must certainly crumble to the dust. This famous key-stone consists of the following proposition ;—"There are two distinct departments of Christian perfection. The perfection of gracious endowment, or moral purity and perfect love. And, the perfection of Spiritual development or Christian maturity."

My opponent found it convenient, to take but a part of my definition of the perfection of gracious endowment. He took simply the two ideas of purity and maturity, and left out perfect love ; which I regard as the positive element in this kind of Christian perfection. I called his attention to this mistake at the time, but he persisted in having his own way. I presume, because it is a much easier task to remove the key-stone of an arch, if one of the adjacent blocks be left out ; and it might be quite impracticable, if that were put in its appropriate place.

He then argued that entire sanctification and forgiveness of sins are concomitant blessings, that is, they are received at the same time. And he quoted as proof; John, 1, 9. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.,," To this, we reply, it does not follow, necessarily, that the cleansing from all unrighteousness occurs simultaneously with the forgiveness of sins. And in this connection the structure of the sentences and the punctuation are worthy of note. The two blessings are not inseparably conjoined in point of time, by this text, for

the declaration which it contains, would be equally true, if they occur at different periods. We will not say, that they cannot possibly take place at the same time, but, we believe, such is not generally the case.

If these are concomitant benefits, then, I presume, the recipients would be as conscious of the one as of the other, and likely to profess both at the same time. For, we know that, young converts are usually very unsophisticated, and manifest a heroic disregard for merely prudential considerations, such as sometimes influence older Christians when they feel that conscience and gratitude require, that they should glorify Chsrit, by making a full verbal confession of his wondrous love and saving power. I have not the least doubt myself, but that a large majority of those who are regenerated, if at the same time they were entirely sanctified, would tell us all about it, and rejoice in the privilege. When they speak of the joys of pardon, they would also tell us something about the sweet rest of perfect love. They could not conceal it, for it would be "like a fire shut up in their bones."

But, what are the facts in the case? We have heard hundreds, perhaps, thousands of young converts give their testimony for Jesus. Like the weeping Mary they loved much, because they had much forgiven, and wished to glorify the Saviour. They speak freely of the forgiveness of sins, of a new heart, of the witness of the Spirit, the love of God in the soul and the hope of heaven; but, they are

wonderfully reticent about this entire sanctification, which, according to our opponent's theory, they received at the same time when they were pardoned.

No one, I am sure, however conservative, need caution any body to be more careful and modest, about making a verbal confession of the hope that is in them; for fear that they themselves, or some body else, might not live up to the standard of scriptural holiness. If there were no professions of entire sanctification, excepting by those who received the blessing simultaneously with regeneration, the silence would be almost as profound and significant as the apocalyptic half hour; when the grand orchestra of heaven was hushed, and angels draped their harps in mourning!

If one fourth, or one tenth, or even one hundredth part, of those who are converted, were to make a clear and unequivocal profession of entire sanctification, as received at the same time, then there would be some chance for this favorite theory; but as it is the stubborn logic of facts, and the uniform testimony of the Church, are decidedly against it. Hence, we conclude, it must be a mistaken idea,—it cannot be true.

But, there are some clear, strong proof-texts, on our side of this question. Two will suffice at present. 2 Cor. 7, 1. "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. you will notice that, the apos-

He speaks of something yet to be done, and not of a work already accomplished. He is also very specific in regard to the matter; it applies to the body and spirit, to the heart and the life. To be cleansed from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, is to be wholly sanctified, and to perfect holiness in the fear of God, is to become morally perfect in experience and practice. There is certainly no propriety, in exhorting persons to seek that, which they have already obtained, or to do a work that has long since been done. "For what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?"

1 Thess. 5. 23. "The very God of peace sanctify you wholly." These words manifestly imply that, the persons addressed were not entirely sanctified at the time. Then one of two things must be true,—either they had never been entirely sanctified, or else they had lost their entire sanctification. Which horn of the dilemma will our opponent take? If he choose the first, and admit that the parties referred to, had never been entirely sanctified, then we have no further controversy. He has fairly come over on our side, and we are agreed,—we hail him welcome!

But, if he prefer the second, let him take that, and say that these persons were entirely sanctified, when they were regenerated, but that they had lost their entire purity. Then let him remember that, according to his own theory, a person cannot loose his entire sanctification, without losing his justification also; hence, it would follow as an inevitable conclu-

sion, that they were not in a justified state, but completely fallen from grace. And, if that be true of all, then there was no living Church, at Thessalonica; nothing but a company of miserable backsliders,—an army of dead men, or a pile of dry bones!

You demur at that conclusion, and so do I,—let the apostle settle the question. In the fifth verse of this chapter, he says, “Ye are all the children of the light, and the children of the day; we are not of the night nor of darkness.” Strange and incomprehensible as it may appear to some, this is the theology of St. Paul.—They were *children of the light*, and yet, *not entirely sanctified*. But, he prays devoutly that, “the very God of peace,”—He who has provided the great *peace* offering, and has spoken *peace* to your believing heart,—that “very God of peace,” now, “sanctify you through and through.” “Faithful is he that calleth you, *who also will do it*.”

I. “By insisting upon entire sanctification, as a special blessing, you undervalue the great work of regeneration.”

Not in the least. We admit that regeneration is a great and glorious work, but, we believe there is a still richer endowment of grace beyond it. The trouble is not, that we disparage regeneration, but that you so magnify it, as to comprehend entire sanctification; which according to the Scriptures, is a subsequent blessing. If, with the apostle, we exhort you to leave “the principles of the doctrine of Christ and go on unto perfection,” that does not

render your present experience less real or important; but, it simply indicates that there is a higher christian life, to which you may attain. Who has any right to take offence at that? Ought we not rather to rejoice, in the sublime possibilities of our nature and destiny?

If this doctrine be true, and especially if we are assured, by personal experience, of its truth, then, we ought by all means to confess it, and insist upon its claims. To refrain from its profession, simply because many others have not realized the same blessing, would be a very doubtful expedient. Such an exercise of courtesy is not sanctioned, either by precept or example, in the Bible. Christ and his apostles, however kind and considerate in their treatment of weak brethren, were not so extremely complimentary to those of meager attainments, who, in view of their opportunities, should have made greater progress, in the divine life. They never withheld the truth, to conceal any body's imperfections, but faithfully "declared the whole counsel of God." Thus St. Paul wrote, "When for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God: and are become such as have need of milk and not of strong meat."

However humiliating the confession may be, it appears, according to this text, that some who had been in a better state, were then in a kind of second spiritual childhood. "*And are become such as have need of milk.*" Of course, "new-born babes"

should "desire the sincere milk of the word, that they may grow thereby." And, it seems that the carnal "babes in Christ," require the same nourishing diet because, though quite old enough to be stronger, yet are they too weak to digest strong meat. Having their favorite lacteal supply,—so well adapted to their enfeebled condition, why should these dear little ones not allow, those of larger growth and mature experience, to enjoy a more substantial meal, if they prefer it? "Let every one be fully persuaded in his own mind."

J. "By the preaching of this doctrine and the profession of this experience, you make invidious distinctions among brethren, and cause dissension in the Church."

The same objection might be urged by those who are entirely destitute of experimental religion, against the preaching and profession of regeneration; for they are very apt to feel disturbed, by the clear, strong testimony of living Christians. They may even imagine that the Church is likely to suffer great loss or serious disadvantage, by such high and positive professions. But, after all, that is not a sufficient reason, why the witness of the spirit ought not to be preached or the knowledge of personal salvation professed, in the Church. Perhaps, the very best means for the conversion of these captious and unbelieving ones, would be, like St. Paul, to confess the saving power of God as realized in our own hearts; and thus convince them of the supernatural element in religion.

Again, we make no distinctions, but those which really exist, and are sanctioned by the word of God. Such we are not only justified in making, but obliged to observe. Thus we read of "the perfecting of the saints;" of some whose "love is made perfect," and of others who are exhorted to "go on unto perfection." Some were merely "sanctified," others were prayed for that they might be "sanctified *wholly*." As these distinctions are taught in the Bible and really exist in the Church, what harm can it do any one to know the facts in the case, or to hear the clearest and strongest testimony upon this point? It would rather be an advantage, especially, to those who desire a more thorough experience of divine power. The living witness would encourage our hearts and strengthen our faith, by his burning words of love, and joyous confession of Christ, as a complete Saviour. "As iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend."

The doctrine and experience of christian perfection so far from causing discord and confusion, constitutes the true basis of unity and peace. Schisms and dissensions have never yet originated in an excess of true piety, but always in the want of pure religion. If the whole Church were entirely sanctified, "envy and strife, and division," would be simple impossible; for these result invariably from abnormal conditions. It is quite probable that, if any are not disposed to advance at all or wish to move along very quietly in the Christian life, such may take offence at

our zeal and make some disturbance on account of this profession. "But Peter and John answered and said unto them, whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard. And St. Paul, says "Do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I shall not be the Servant of Christ.

There are vast multitudes in the Church, who are not satisfied with their present attainment, and only need to be assured of their high privilege to embrace it. And there are but few in the ministry, who would not adopt the sentiment of an eminent divine, when he said, "I am not willing to occupy the position of a spiritual watchdog to stand at the gate-way of the kingdom and bark at others when they are entering into the gospel feast, but I intend to go in myself and share with them in the rich repast, which Heaven has provided for us all," In view of these facts, and many others that might be named in this connection we shall continue to proclaim "the unsearchable riches of Christ and His power, to save to the uttermost."

K. That was an interesting specimen of old philosophy and new divinity, which the last speaker gave us. He took us away back to the days of Pythagoras, Plato and Aristotle, who considered matter, and the human body as consisting of matter, to be the seat and source of evil. I am quite sure, that he might have done better — without going so far from home — and have found truer philosophy and purer faith, in Moses

and the Prophets, or in Christ and his Apostles.

We were also gravely informed that, Mr. Wesley made a grand mistake, in as much as he placed the carnality of man in the soul, and not in the body, as he should have done. Then we were told that the sanctification of the soul is complete when we are regenerated, but that the body retains the elements of moral depravity, and that these are to be overcome and subjugated by habits of right doing ; and when this result is attained, then we are entirely sanctified.

We object to this theory, first, because it attributes sanctification to good works and human effort, instead of faith in Christ and the agency of the Holy Ghost, as we are taught by St. Paul, 1 Cor. 6. 11. "And such were some of you ; but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the spirit of our God." It appears then that sanctification is not by works, but through faith and by the Holy Ghost.

We object again, because it predicates moral qualities of the body, which can only inhere in the intelligent and volitional spirit. It would be just as reasonable, to ascribe mental as moral powers to the physical nature of man. Immobility is one of the inherent properties of matter, hence, the body has no power of motion in itself, much less the capacity to antagonize the wonderful energies of the soul.

The great moral conflict in man, is not between the soul and the body ; but, it is between the spirit-

ual or God-ward aspirations of our nature, and the lower or carnal tendencies of the soul itself. For instance, I think, it must be quite apparent to all, that, pride, anger, envy, covetousness and unbelief, do not proceed from the body, nor depend on physical conditions of any kind whatever. At the same time, it is equally clear that, these vile passions,—“the works of the flesh,” as they are called, do antagonize “the fruits of the Spirit,”—the nobler impulses of our nature, which are, “love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.” Hence, we conclude that, if any of these evil tendencies are found to exist in man, subsequent to his regeneration, we can’t locate them in the body, but they belong to the soul; and that soul evidently needs a more thorough sanctification.

There are only three kinds of impurity that, properly, may be applied to the human body, as such. The first, is personal defilement, or a filthy skin. For this, the best remedy is, a good bath, once or twice a week in winter time, and every morning during the warm season. That will secure an *external* purification, very pleasant and desirable. Nor can any body have a clean person and a healthy skin, without an occasional washing. The frequent ablutions practiced by the ancient Jews, have a moral and hygienic significance, which a great many Christians might study to advantage.

The second, is an impurity of the blood, a derangement of the physical functions,—an abnormal, un-

healthy or diseased condition of the body. For this we would prescribe medicine according to the indications. We should resort to those remedies which produce an alterative effect in the system, and thus hope to arrest the malady, and ultimately to procure a *constitutional* purification or a restoration to perfect health.

The third, is that which results from the mortality of man. The body is denominated, *vile* or *corruptible*, on account of its liability to death, disintegration and decay. For this kind of impurity, we know of no other antidote but the resurrection power of God. And, we rejoice in the blessed assurance that, "If a man die, he shall live again. We shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible." This is a *radical* purification of man's physical nature, and will be accomplished, when this mortal shall put on immortality. "Then shall be brought to pass the saying, that is written, "Death is swallowed up in victory, O death, where is thy sting?" "O grave, where is thy victory?"

L. We have had some rather metaphysical discussions, on the testimony from experience; and it has been objected that undue importance is attached to this kind of evidence.

Let us see how the matter stands when fairly presented, I think, we shall find that, it has a wonderful significance, amounting to moral demonstration. We admit that there may be a difference between

the facts of experience, and the statement of those facts. The verbal statement may be defective or exaggerated, containing too little or too much, that is quite possible. But, it is equally true that, it may be a correct and truthful representation of what has actually transpired in the conscious experience of the individual. If the witness be competent and reliable we could not reject his testimony, on the simple ground that he might be mistaken; for, we ourselves would be still more liable to err, in judging of his experience. If he does not know the facts himself how can we know them any better? If he cannot relate his own experience correctly, who of us can tell it better for him?

And, if a large number of intelligent and respectable Christian men and women, were to bear testimony to the very same facts of experience, then, the evidence of truth and correctness in their statements, would be greatly increased: and the probability of mistake or misrepresentation would be correspondingly diminished. If those witnesses lived in different countries, belonged to various denominations, gave their testimony under dissimilar circumstances, and at remote periods, fifty or a hundred years apart, one not knowing what the other said, and yet, they should, in substance, testify to the same experimental knowledge; then it would certainly seem to be more unreasonable to deny than to accept their evidence in the case.

Again, if we should call their attention to the fact that, they might possibly be mistaken, in regard to

their experience or, at least, the statements which they have rendered. And if they were to re-investigate the matter with the utmost candor, as many have done over and over again; and after all this rigid analysis, not only a majority, but all with one voice should declare themselves to be more than ever convinced of the truth of their former testimony, in reference to this experience; this would greatly increase and strengthen the evidence; and thus make it almost, if not quite irresistible.

And again, suppose that a large number of those who give this testimony, were at one time decidedly skeptical upon this doctrine, and indeed publicly committed against it. But in spite of all this former prejudice, and avowed opposition, they have become fully convinced of its truth; and now profess to enjoy this blessed experience, and do also manifest its power in their spirit and conversation. We know that there are multitudes of just such cases. Will any one say, that there is no evidence of truth, in what these witnesses affirm? Or that their statements are just as likely to be false as true? and that he believes them to be altogether mistaken, every one of them?

And yet, that is about, what those brethren must assume, who repudiate the evidence from experience.

If any body is sufficiently advanced, in the science of incredulity, to adopt that position; then let him account for this wide-spread, long-continued and persistent delusion, of so large a portion, of the most spiritual and devoted members and ministers, of the Christian Church.

"The Lord's portion is his people. He careth for you."

Once more, suppose we find that, there are certain passages in the word of God, which appear to teach this doctrine, and that can readily be explained and adjusted upon this theory: but which give us a great deal of trouble to dispose of them satisfactorily upon any other hypothesis. Also, that many of the ablest and most reliable expositors, give this interpretation of those scriptures; and especially, the honored and trusted authorities of our Church to whom, we are accustomed to refer with so much confidence, upon all great and perplexing questions, because they have so generally rendered us good service.

It is true that, Wesley, Watson, Clarke and other standard authors, are not infallible, but, neither are we. If they have been mistaken in some things, we may be in error upon this point. In what respects are we superior to Wesley? And how came we by such exalted attainments? Mr. Wesley, brought, to the investigation of this question, an amount of culture, experience and general observation, which it is impossible for any of us to command. And, it might be prudent, before we venture to ignore his authority, to be quite sure, that we can do better for ourselves and those committed to our charge, than to accept his teaching.

And, best of all, the witness of the Spirit, in every stage of man's salvation, and to the highest possible degree is comprehended in the promises and provisions of the gospel. John 14.17,26. "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter

that he may abide with you *forever*; even the *spirit of truth*. The Comforter which is the Holy Ghost whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you *all things* when he the Spirit of truth is come, *he shall guide you into all truth*. ”

And of similar import and application, is the language of St. Paul. 1 Cor 2.10—12. “God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit for the Spirit searched all things, yea, *the deep things of God*. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man that is in him? Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we *might know the things that are freely given to us of God*.” This, I presume, embraces conviction of sin, the witness of adoption, the evidence of full salvation and any communication, that may be received from above, by the Holy Ghost.

All gracious operations in the human heart, are produced and attested by the Divine Spirit. He is the efficient cause and infallible witness of our personal salvation, from its incipient development, through all its stages and degrees, to the final consummation.

“For it is God that worketh in you, both to will and to do of his good pleasure.” And, “he that believeth on the Son of God, hath the witness in himself.” These declarations and promises, are not limited to the apostles or to primitive times; for the Spirit was to “reprove the *world* of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.” He was to remain with them *forever*, that is with the Church in all ages.

The Paraclete was to be, not only a Comforter, but also an advocate, *instructor* and *guide*. He was to "teach them all things," and "guide them into all truth," and enable them to "know the things that are freely given to us of God.

The point that we wish to make here is, that if a large number of Christians, at the present day, profess to have experienced entire sanctification as a special blessing, and to have the witness of the spirit clearly attesting the fact, it is just what may properly be included in these precious promises. For, it is not more than the "all things," which the spirit was to teach them, and the "all truth," into which he was to guide the Church, and the proposed knowledge of "the things that are freely given to us of God." This certainly comprehends even, "the deep things of God," which according to St. Paul, are revealed to us by the Spirit.

But, some like doubting Thomas, will not believe except they can put their finger into the print of the nails and thrust their hand into the open side of the risen Jesus. He preferred to take counsel of his own ignorance, rather than accept the positive testimony of ten others, who had seen the Lord after his resurrection. And so, there are many to day, who persist in denying this experience, simply because they have not realized it themselves; even though ten thousand should testify from personal consciousness, of its blessed truth and power, and also exhibit its fruits in their lives.

If Thomas had been in his place at the prayer

meeting, on that Sabbath evening, it would have helped his piety and saved him some trouble. And if his doubtful successors, will just place themselves in the line of duty, at the next "meetnig for the promotion of holiness," the resurrection power will be manifested again, and we shall yet hear them exclaim—"My Lord and my God." Jesus is risen indeed, and "He is able to save unto the uttermost."

"Tis done; thou dost this moment save
With full Salvation bless;
Redemption through thy blood I have,
And spotless love and peace."

M. There is one additional point, to which I would direct attention, for a few moments; and that is, the homiletic tendencies of some brethren.

They have been especially eloquent on the practical aspect of the question; and their earnest appeals have always been received with great favor. That, however, is just what might be expected in a company of Methodist ministers. For we all believe in practical piety, and agree that those who profess holiness ought by all means to live right. "By tneir fruits ye shall know them. But I submit, that to require persons to live holiness, without the experimental grace of holiness, would be somewhat like the cruel task of "making brick without straw."

Of course, the "little children in grace" whose "sins are forgiven, for his name's sake," ought to "leave the principles of the doctrine of Christ and go

on unto perfection." But it must be very apparent that, until they obtain perfection in grace, they cannot exhibit perfection in practice. 'The stream cannot rise higher than its source."

Again, the young men in experience, who were not entirely sanctified at the time when they were converted but, have subsequently obtained this excellent grace even they should not be expected to furnish the brightest examples of practical holiness. It is true they are "strong, and have overcome the wicked one," but they have not had time for the full development of Christian character.

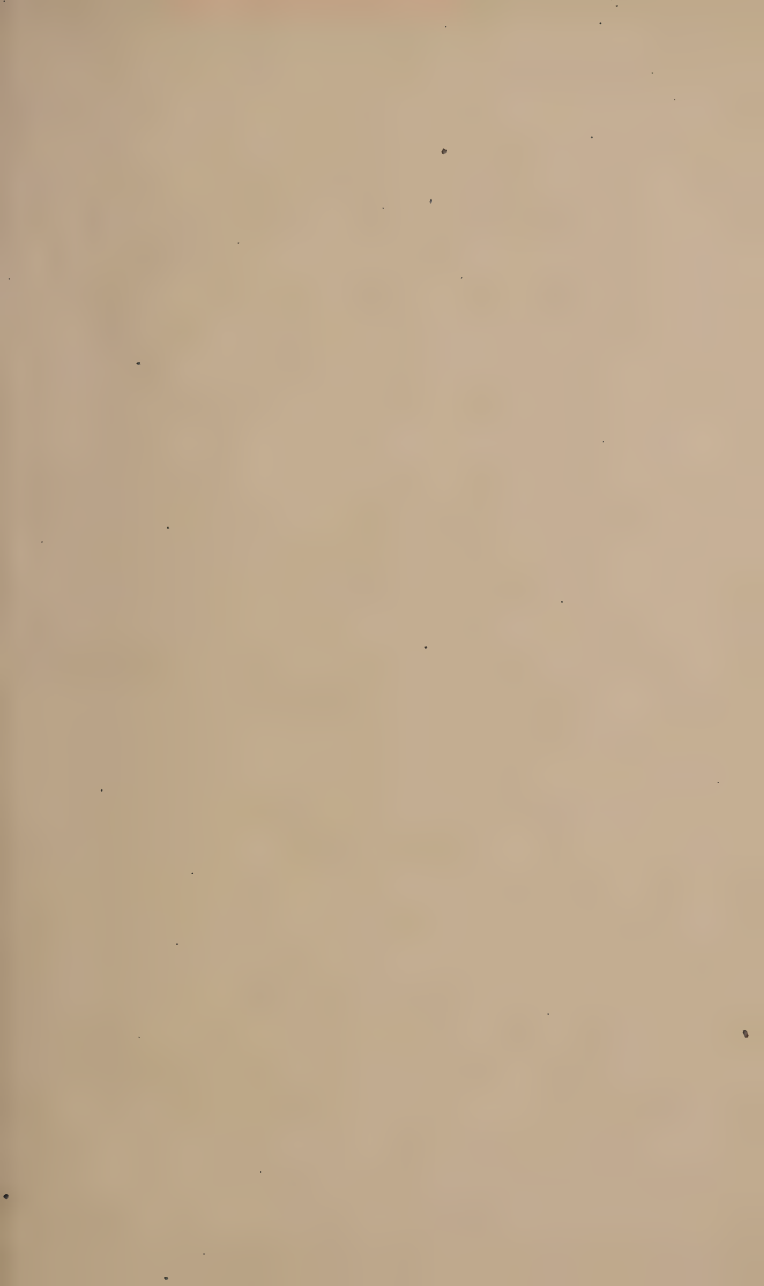
But, the "*fathers* in Israel", who were entirely sanctified, when they were regenerated, and who also have retained their abundant sanctification, as well as, their complete justification ever since; these may justly be expected to present the most illustrious examples of practical holiness. They were so fully saved in the beginning, and have been growing in this grace so many years, that they ought to be "perfect and complete," "without spot or wrinkle or any such thing." If there is any virtue in full salvation, or in spiritual development, then it is to these *venerable fathers* that we must look, for the rich, ripe fruits of the truly apostolic perfection.

Now, I trust that those who advocate this theory, of entire sanctification as concomitant with regeneration, will not forget, that, as they claim to be first in this grace, so they are first in its responsibilities. We who have more recently obtained it, will endeavor to do the best that we can, but they must lead

the way and show us how to *live* holiness. "Let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another."

THE END.





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